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THE MAGAZINE OF JAPANESE ANIMATION

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Haruhiko Mikimoto Retrospective

Macross

Gunbuster

Megazone 23

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Aim for the Top! Gunbuster

Much more than a simple parody, *Gunbuster* is a frothy concoction that starts with traditional Japanese science fiction robot drama, folds in Mikimoto's dreamy, "cute girl" character designs and thoroughly mixes in a healthy portion of humor to produce one of the most popular OAVs in years

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Editorial Comments

Project A-Kon Diary

The first annual Project A-Kon was held July 28-29, 1990 at the Richardson Hilton, located in a suburb of Dallas, Texas. ANIMAG *had the pleasure of being represented at the over 400-member convention in the person of your humble editor. The following are excerpts from a diary I kept during the con.* ANIMAG *would like to thank Meri Wakefield, Robert Jenks, Dawn Williams and everyone else at Project A-Kon for making the convention so much fun. Hope to see you guys next year!*

11:15 p.m., 7/27/90
Actually managed to leave house on time to make 12:35 a.m. flight to Dallas-Ft. Worth. During flight, seated next to man with a hook for a hand and a woman who picked teeth and, after carefully examined findings, flicked grisly stuff onto floor. Declined in-flight snack when offered by stewardess.

4:25 a.m., 7/28/90
Flight arrived ten minutes early. Representative from the convention wearing Project A-Kon T-shirt waiting. Even at 6:30 a.m. Dallas-time, humid and sticky and nasty. Ugh.

9:30 a.m., 7/28/90
Woke to Pee-Wee's Playhouse (fell asleep to NWA Wrestling). Staggered downstairs, given hand-lettered "PIP" ("probably interesting and/or important person") badge and introduced to Meri Wakefield, con coordinator.

10:00 a.m., 7/28/90
Local newspapers apparently even more obsessed with obscenity than San Francisco: "Dallas Rap: Crew Album's Obscene" and "The Dirty War—Dallas Vice Squad Puts Clamp on Porn." Good food at hotel restaurant.

11:00 a.m., 7/28/90
Sweet, enthusiastic, apple-cheeked Meri made pros feel at home with beribboned baskets of goodies during opening ceremonies. Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles artist Lou Scarborough, Jr. and Chip 'n Dale creator Tex Henson formed instant rapport during guest intros.

11:25 a.m., 7/28/90
My Youth in Arcadia Roman Album on sale in dealers room for $40.00+. Yikes—it's worse than Books Nippan!

12:00 p.m., 7/28/90
Potential Cage of Death match with infamous Randall "Greatest Evil in the Universe" Stukey averted when self-described "Evil" turns out to be very nice (and very pink). Instructed publisher's son to take *lots* of pictures to prove that two animation fans *can* occupy the same space at the same time.

2:30 p.m., 7/28/90
Drove around most of Richardson in (unairconditioned) Ford Mustang with Eternity's *Captain Harlock* writer Robert Gibson *et uxor* to find lunch location not only closed but boarded up. Ended up at Burger King next to con hotel; pleased to report food tastes exactly same as home.

4:00 p.m., 7/28/90
Survived first panel ("Ask ANIMAG's Editor") at 3:30. Expected egg-wielding fans nowhere in sight; reports of Texas as "hotbed of anti-ANIMAG sentiment" greatly exaggerated.

6:30 p.m., 7/28/90
Sat with publisher Tibbetts for "Anime Magazine Publishing" panel at 6:00 p.m. No egg-wielding fans here, either. Made a mental note to find better informers.

7:45 p.m., 7/28/90
Have discovered my room's adjacent to "Eve II" animation room. —Ah! I hear Harlock's voice. Must be a Lupin show . . . yes, *Castle of Cagliostro*. I *will* meet you someday, Inoue voice-of-Harlock!

9:27 p.m., 7/28/90
Attended spaghetti dinner for GOHs in hospitality room. Lots of food, interesting people to talk to, Bugs Bunny on the TV. Bowed out early to sneak up to room and, after falling asleep in tub, crawled into bed. These 48-hour days take a lot out of you!

12:40 p.m., 7/29/90
Woke up late but managed to make 11:30 panel ("Getting Recognition for Anime Magazines") on time. Tibbetts joined me on panel to field questions. These people know more about ANIMAG than I do.

1:00 p.m., 7/29/90
Great food at hotel restaurant. Why am I the only person in here? Can I have some more coffee?

4:00 p.m., 7/29/90
Found out the two girls in the best Dirty Pair costumes I've ever seen drove all the way up from Atlanta to attend con and have been doing same for past 2-1/2 years after seeing DP on tape. Yuri tells me she's 21, engaged to marry the man in the Harlock getup in April, and that her first name is Leslie; Kei is 18, just graduating high school, thinking about working at Eastern Onion like her sister Leslie, and that her name is Lauren. They both say it's their real hair . . . how *does* Kei get it to stand up like that?

7:15 p.m., 7/29/90
Said goodbyes to everyone at con and left early for airport with Tibbetts. Spent time in air between Dallas and San Francisco reading Ellison's *Angry Candy* wishing I had the nerve to go up and talk to Ellison at a convention.

11:28 p.m., 7/29/90
San Francisco is cold, windy and foggy… it's good to be home!

Trish Ledoux
Editor

ANIMATION UPDATE

Gundam F-91

By Takayuki Karahashi, Annette Ledoux and Toshifumi Yoshida

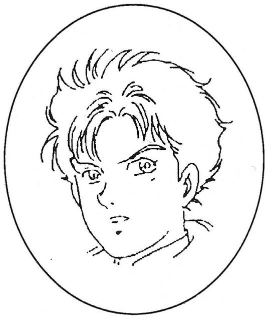
It's been over a decade since *Mobile Suit Gundam* first aired in 1979. This spring, *Gundam* enters the 90s with Sunrise's much-ballyhooed new movie.

Gundam F-91 takes place 30 to 50 years after *Char's Counterattack*. The action begins when the "Crossbones Vanguard," a military/political organization founded by the fanatical reformer Meitzuar Roma, announces their plan to remake the "stagnant" Earth Federation into "Cosmo Babylonia," their own image of utopia.

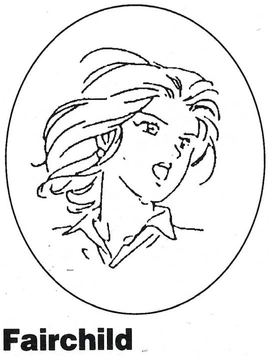
Seabook Ano, an industrial high school student at the Side 4 colony Frontier IV, becomes involved in the conflict when a mobile suit lands during the middle of an annual festival and turns the peaceful school into a battlefield. After his childhood playmate is abducted by one of the Crossbones Vanguard, Seabook escapes to the neighboring colony of Frontier I where he is picked up by agents of the Federation and becomes involved in the F-91 Project.

When Seabook is finally reunited with Cecile they meet as enemies, for now she claims to be "Vera Roma," a commander of the Crossbones Vanguard . . . .

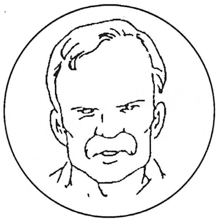
Gundam F-91 is promising to be one of the hottest Gundam projects yet. Stay tuned for more details as they become available . . . same Gundam time, same Gundam channel.



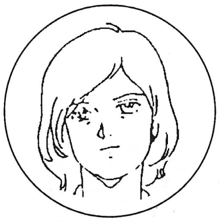
Seabook Ano
17-year-old high school boy inadvertently drawn into the war who joins the Federation and later becomes the pilot of the new mobile suit, Gundam F-91.



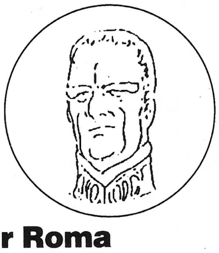
Cecile Fairchild
16-year-old girl who grew up with Seabook on Frontier IV. After she is discovered to indeed be a true member of the Roma family, Cecile confronts her former childhood playmate dressed as a man and tells him her name is really Vera Roma.



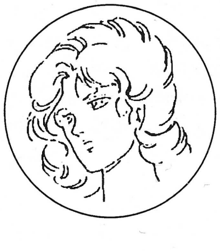
Lesbee Ano
Seabook's father and former metallurgist now working as an architect.



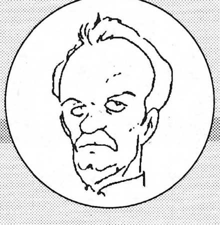
Monique Ano
Seabook's mother and biocomputer engineer also involved in the F-91 Project.



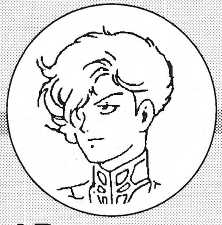
Meitzuar Roma
Founder of the Crossbones Vanguard and Cecile's grandfather.



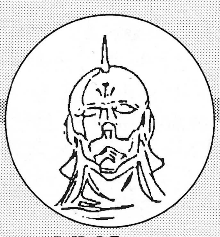
Nadia Roma
Ten years ago, Cecile's mother Nadia deserted the Roma family to elope. Current whereabouts unknown.



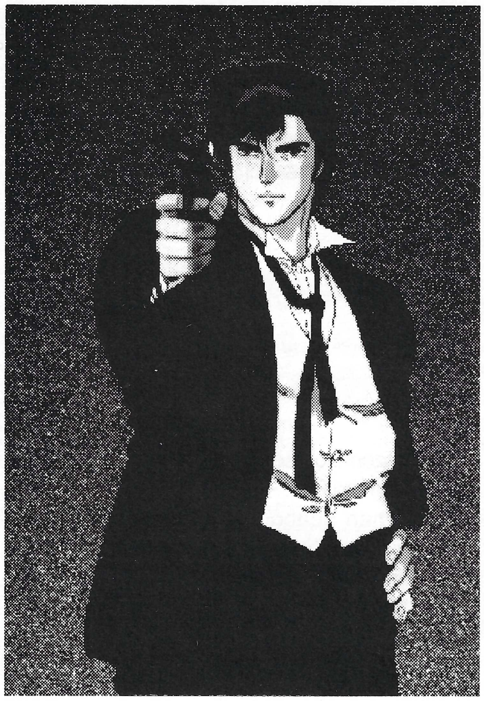
Tess Fairchild
Cecile's stepfather and bakery owner on Frontier IV.



Dorrel Roma
Half brother to Cecil and Crossbones Vanguard mobile suit pilot.



"Iron Mask" (Carruzo Roma)
Leader of the Crossbones Vanguard who claims to be Cecile's father. True identity unknown.



City Hunter

Ryo Saeba, the one and only City Hunter, comes back to the small screen this fall in two new OAVs from Sunrise as a follow-up to last summer's hit *City Hunter* movie, "Magnum of Love and Destiny."

Both OAV volumes will be released through CIC Victor VHS-only on 9/28/90 and 10/26/90, respectively. Character designs are by Sachiko Kamimura (*Venus Wars*, *ZZ Gundam*), who also performed art direction for the second volume; art direction for the first volume is by Yasuo Kitahara. Both volumes are based on Tsukasa Hojo's original manga, with direction by Kenji Kodama (*Cat's Eye*, *God Mazinger*).

The first volume, "Bay City Wars," involves the dictator of a small South American country bent on revenge after he is displaced by U.S. troops. The dictator plots to take over a supercomputer located in Tokyo's Bay City Hotel with the capability of launching enough missiles to completely obliterate an entire continent . . . exactly what the dictator had in mind for the U.S.

The second volume, "The Million Dollar Conspiracy," features a beautiful CIA agent bent on revenge against her brother's assassin. After she hires Ryo as a bodyguard, other CIA agents and various assorted hitmen become involved in a mind-boggling series of double crosses.

The producers say that the first volume is an action-filled story with *mokkori*s kept to a minimum, although they make up for that in the second volume by overcompensating with the infamous *mokkori*-hammer combination. Either way, it'll be classic *City Hunter*.

Original Animation Videos

- **Mobile Demon King Granzord, "The Last Magical Battle" (Volume 1 of 2)**
  Witness the spectacle of a giant superdeformed robot team saving the Earth from the falling moon. Takara; 30 minutes. Release date: 8/10/90

- **Ultraman Graffiti**
  What is Ultraman's life like on his home planet in the M-87 galaxy? Find out in this superdeformed Ultraman world where Ultrafolks lead ordinary lives of school, work and commute. Bandai; 60 minutes. Release date: 8/10/90

- **"Goddamn! Go Ahead!" (Volume 2 of 2)**
  The gripping tale of humans and rally car mecha as it could only be told by Kaoru Shintani of *Area 88* fame. Victor Music Industry; 45 minutes. Release date: 8/16/90

- **The New Wild 7**
  "Violence and action" is the motto of the Wild 7 team as they roam over the world to ensure the safety of Japanese from evil both domestic and foreign. Pack-In Video; 50 minutes. Release date: 8/16/90

- **Riki-Oh 2**
  There is no enemy before this soldier of fortune. Bandai; 45 minutes. Release date: 8/24/90

- **B.B. 2**
  The coming-to-America of a genius boxer after he flees Japan for busting out the eyeballs of a thug. Directed by boxing story veteran Dezaki of *Ashita no Joe* fame. Bandai; 45 minutes. Release date: 8/24/90

- **Gall Force, Earth Chapter (Volume 2 of 3)**
  Incompetence in the upper ranks provides for further suffering for Sandy. The next impossible plan involves demolishing the MME home base in Australia—along with the entire continent—using the alien weapons discovered on the moon. Polydor; 45 minutes. Release date: 8/25/90

- **Keiko Fukuyama Theater**
  A collection of short stories by the manga artist Keiko Fukuyama ranging from black humor to heart-warming fantasy. Toshiba EMI; 30 minutes. Release date: 8/29/90

- **Every Day is Sunday**
  Based on the manga of the same title by Yuzo Takada, also known for his *3 x 3 Eyes* series. Yumi Takeshita is a freshman police officer and wherever she goes there is always a case to solve. Movic; 30 minutes. Release date: 9/10/90

- **Adventure! Iczer-3 (Volume 1 of 6)**
  Iczer-3 inherits her powers from Iczer-1 to save Earth from the remaining forces of Big Gold, now known as "Neos Gold." Polydor; 60 minutes. Release date: 9/25/90

- **Earthian II**
  Cliff is a rock singer, but *really* he's a fallen angel in love with the human woman, Blair. Trouble surfaces when the survey team from heaven finds out about this. Toshiba EMI; 45 minutes. Release date: 9/27/90

- **Utsunomiko (Volume 1 of 6)**
  During eighth-century Japan, a handful of aristocrats ruled in tyranny and the people lived dismally. The psychic prince Utsunomiko stood up for the people, and now he travels to heaven to fight Indra, the patron god of Buddhism with whom the aristocrats side over the native gods. Bandai; 30 minutes. Release date: 10/1/90

- **Beast Front Line (Volume 1 of 3)**
  When a mad scientist tries to create the ideal human by fusion of man and beast, his son vows revenge for his father's use of him and his mother as guinea pigs. (Of course, he has the powers of the beast by then.) Tokuma Communications; 45 minutes. Release date: 10/1/90

- **The Tale of the Eight Dogs (Volume 1 of 6)**
  Based on a 98-volume novel of Japan's Edo period, the chronicle of eight warriors of fate . . . each of whom is born with an orb representing one of the eight virtues of Confucius. These espers are drawn together during this time of unrest and fateful decisions to rebuild the House of Satomi. Soshin Eizo; 30 minutes. Release date: 10/25/90
- **Demon Beast Warrior Luna Vulgar (Volume 1 of 4)**
  Luna is an ordinary warrior-princess of an ordinary kingdom until one day when a freakish act of magic fuses her body with the legendary dragon, Vulgar. Together, they become Luna Vulgar, roaming the country in search of evil to squash as well as a cure to separate their bodies. Pony Canyon; 30 minutes. No release date
- **Mobile Police Patlabor**
  The television series ends in September, but *Patlabor* lives on as a video series. The story continues where the television series leaves off with 16 new OAV episodes planned. This time, the "Gryphon" labor comes back to Japan, and the new "Type-0" labors replace the AV-98 Ingrams. Bandai; 30 minutes. Release date: 11/1/90
- **Violence Jack, "Hell's Wind"**
  A motorcycle gang known as "Hell's Wind" terrorizes the survivors of the Tokyo earthquake until the legendary Violence Jack comes to town. Japan Home Video. Release date: 11/1/90

Upcoming Manga Releases

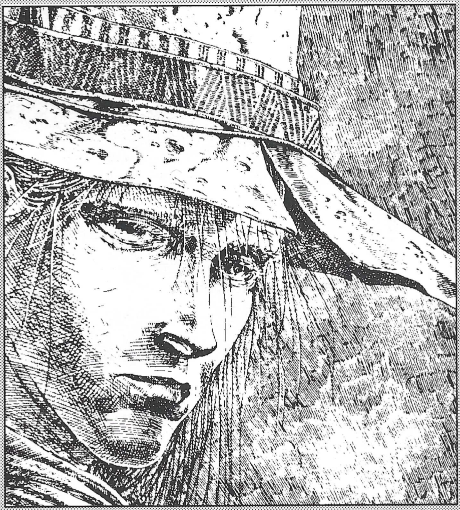
Gunhed

Starting this November, Viz Comics will be breaking into the area of color comics. Their first offering will be *Gunhed*, a three-issue mini-series published on a bimonthly basis.

Gunhed was originally a science fiction/action movie in Japan and has been adapted to the comics medium by a fan favorite, Kia Asamiya. Set in the early 21st century, a group of ragtag techno-bandits along with a lone Texas Ranger are pitted against the awesome threat of an evil computer intending to control the entire planet.

Gunhed #1 has a November release date, while #2 and #3 will be released in January and March, 1991, respectively. The original Japanese film *Gunhed* is scheduled to be released here in the U.S. in the summer of 1991.

Shion: Blade of the Minstrel



Scheduled for a September release, Viz' first Spectrum Editions title is *Shion: Blade of the Minstrel.*

Shion is a quasi-medieval tale which blends together the humanistic themes that span ages and cultures with the spiritual adventures of a wandering minstrel/swordsman who seeks the fantastic beast plaguing his dreams and life since childhood. Against a fantastic landscape of a magician's dream, he wanders in search of the monster he must kill.

Shion is written and drawn by Yu Kinutani. It has full-color covers protected by a vinyl slip-cover, 80 interior black-and-white pages and retails for $9.95 US/$14.25 CAN.

Hotel Harbor View

The second offering of Viz' Spectrum Editions presents a tribute to the hard-boiled mystery genre with *Hotel Harbor View.*

This uniquely Japanese view of an American genre takes the action from Hong Kong to Paris in two scintillating stories of the intimacy of love and death, of killers and the killed and the awful implications of these relationships. *Hotel Harbor View* is a title which is intended for mature readers and contains adult situations, nudity and strong language.

Hotel Harbor View will be 96 black-and-white interior pages with full-color covers. It features a vinyl slipcover, is priced at $9.95 US/$14.25 CAN and will ship in October, 1990.

3 x 3 Eyes

Coming spring/summer 1991 from Studio Proteus and Innovation is *3 x 3 Eyes*, a mystical fantasy by the author of *Everyday is Sunday*, Juzo Takada.

The story opens in Tibet, as a dying Japanese explorer passes a letter to a young Tibetan woman—or at least that's what she appears to be. He tells her to find his son Yakumo in Tokyo. Only Yakumo, he tells her, can help her to become a human being . . . .

3 x 3 Eyes is translated by Toshifumi Yoshida and Toren Smith. Retouch and lettering is by Tom Orzechowski; the editor is to be announced. It is priced at $2.25 and will consist of 32 black-and-white pages.

Version.3

This spring, Studio Proteus and Eclipse Comics will release *Version.3*, a science fiction story by artist/writer Hisashi Sakaguchi which appeared originally in the Japanese periodical *Comic Tom.*

In the near future, scientists working on a new commercial biochip discover a revolutionary design that enables a chip not only to learn but to remember. Effectively a primitive miniature brain, the chip is capable of independent growth and eventually develops its own ego. It begins to reproduce out of control, and government officials make plans to put it into a permanent cryogenic sleep before it is stolen by a member of the original development team.

Version.3 is translated by Fred Schodt and Toren Smith. Retouch and lettering is by Wayne Truman; editing is by Greg S. Baisden. It is priced at $2.25 and will be released in 13 issues of 32-40 black-and-white pages each.

The Venus Wars

Yoshikazu Yasuhiko's latest film will be released in comic form by Studio Proteus and Dark Horse beginning March, 1991.

In the year 2003, a titanic collision between the immense ice asteroid "P-3" and the planet Venus transformed Earth's closest neighbor into a habitable world. Seventy years after the accidental terraforming, mankind has colonized the two main continents and begins a bloodthirsty battle over the fate of the planet with 19-year-old Ken Falkirk in the center of it all.

Translation for *The Venus Wars* is by Alan Gleason and Toren Smith. Retouch and lettering is by Tom Orzechowski; editing is by Chris Warner. Starting March, 1991, 28 issues will be released in all. Issues will vary from 32 to 40 pages. Cover price is estimated at $2.25.

Lost Continent

Akihiro Yamada's *Lost Continent* is soon to be released by Studio Proteus and Eclipse International as two six-part monthly series.

Lost Continent is the story of Naruse, a journalist, and Hazesura, a young professor of archaeology, who together investigate the mysterious case of a deserted airplane floating off the Japanese coast. It turns out to be the "Shirase," which disappeared more than a year ago during an exploratory flight over the North Pole.

Translation is by Alan Gleason and Toren Smith. Retouch and lettering is by Tom Orzechowski; editing is by Greg S. Baisden. The first series will consist of six 56- or 64-page square-bound issues, priced at $3.50 each.

YOTODEN

By Eric Hedman

The Story Thus Far

The year is 1582. Central Japan is in the midst of the most violent phase of its civil war or *Sengoku* (literally, "warring nation") period. Nobunaga Oda, in his quest to rule all of Japan, has allied himself with and has become possessed by demons who seek the end of the world. The coming reign of blood and darkness has been foretold by an ancient prophecy: after the coming of the comet and the rising of the "Dark Gods," three blades—a sword, a spear, and a dagger—will unite to vanquish evil.

Nobunaga's increasing power is threatened by the secret peasant and religious warriors of Japan, as well as many of the secretive and fanatical ninja clans. Ayame, a young girl of the Kasumi ninja clan, masculinizes her name to "Ayanosuke" and becomes the bearer of one of the legendary blades, the dagger. Joining her in her quest to destroy Nobunaga is Sakon of the Hyuga clan, holder of the enchanted sword, and Ryoma of the Hagakure clan, who wields the third blade, the spear. Together with Ryoma's sister, Kikyo, they succeed in defeating one of Nobunaga's allies, the satanic Saegusa Jinnai. Kikyo's tragic death serves to stoke their determination to destroy the cause of the encroaching evil, Nobunaga and his demonic valet, Ranmaru Mori.

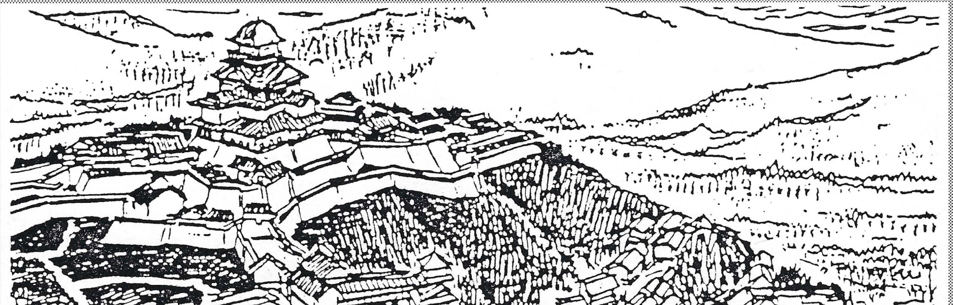
Now, Nobunaga launches his next bloody attempt to remove another obstacle to his domination of the Japanese isles: the Iga ninja clan.

Historical Notes

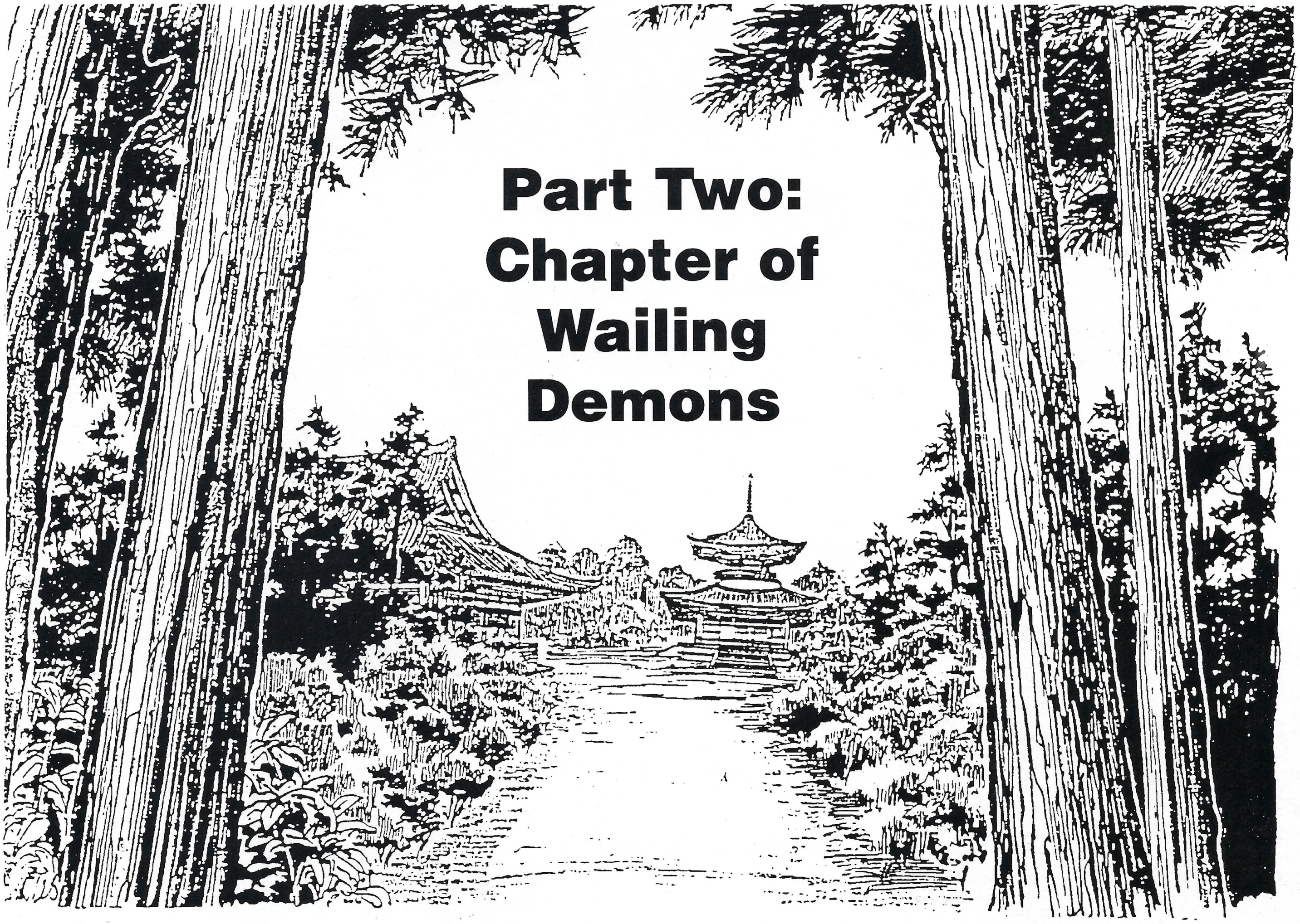
Hideyoshi Toyotomi

Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1536-1598), a prominent historical figure popular to this day, succeeded Nobunaga Oda and later went on to unify the entire country of Japan. Born as the son of a poor farmer in Aichi Prefecture, Hideyoshi was promoted to the rank of military commander while in Nobunaga's service.

Although it is difficult to select one achievement among the many contributions Hideyoshi made to Japanese culture, the construction of Osaka Castle is perhaps the



Part Two: Chapter of Wailing Demons



Raging Battles

At a small roadside inn, three leaders of insurgent ninja and religious groups clandestinely meet to discuss Nobunaga's systematic slaying of all resistance to his reign. They are fatally interrupted when demons led by Kibeishi arrive.

In his bedchambers in Azuchi Castle, Nobunaga Oda wakes screaming from a nightmare of the Iga ninja. When summoned, his demonic valet Ranmaru Mori tells Nobunaga that to act on an impulse to eliminate the Iga personally would be playing into the hands of their enemies.

Near the ancient capital city of Kyoto, Nobunaga forces battle furiously against the Iga ninja and their allies, Ayanosuke and Ryoma Kogure. When the fight goes against them, Ayanosuke and Ryoma wonder how the enemy can know the secret roads so well, and wonder if there is a traitor among them. Nearby, Sakon of the Hyuga clan and his companion Jimbei spy two of the neighboring Koga clan reporting to Nobunaga's men.

Hidden in the forest, Ayanosuke and Ryoma meet with one of Nobunaga's evil allies: Genzo of Otowa, demon master of illusion. Hypnotized and about to be slain, Ayanosuke and Ryoma are roused by painful cuts from a knife thrown by a young girl, Kayo of the Koga clan. At a disadvantage, Genzo vanishes from the scene. Ryoma is stricken by Kayo's resemblance to his dead sister, Kikyo.

most well-known. Osaka Castle, popularized in James Clavell's epic samurai tale *Shogun*, required the assembled strength of over 60,000 laborers for two and a half years, and is often symbolized as a monument to Hideyoshi's glory.

Hideyoshi created a nation-wide land surveying system called *kenchi*, designed to accurately monitor the financial power of feudal lords. To prohibit a mass armed insurgence by the peasant class, he was also the strict enforcer of a law called *katana-gari*, which strictly prohibited the use of arms to the samurai class alone.

Hideyoshi was also a patron of the arts, delighting in *sado* (the way of tea) and *Noh*, a classic drama of Japan. Hideyoshi was known to perform *Noh* for his junior officers as a symbol of gratitude upon occasion; whether said officers appreciated the gesture is unknown.

Hideyoshi was a seemingly just yet unmannerly nobleman prone to fits of rage and poetic frivolity. He would, while away from Osaka, write to his wife at every possible opportunity in an unusual manner. Hideyoshi's favor of the flowing, feminine *hiragana* writing as opposed to the exceedingly complex *kanji* system of Chinese ideographs was seen as eccentric by his contemporaries.

Hideyoshi appeared peripherally as an insane shogun in the popular samurai drama, *Masamune, the One-Eyed Dragon*. This portrayal was based in part on Hideyoshi's ambitious dreams of conquering Korea, China and India. His offensive against Korea, involving more than 150,000 soldiers, ended unsuccessfully despite the superiority of Hideyoshi's troops because of the mass resistance of the people of Korea.

—Eric Hedman and Trish Ledoux

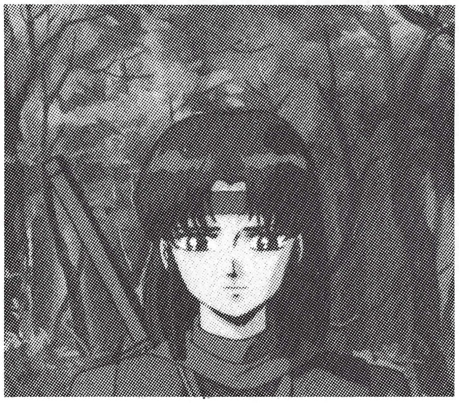
Serious Decisions

In the main house of the Iga clan, Sakon, Ryoma, Ayanosuke and the elder council discuss the possibility of betrayal by the Koga. They agree that this would explain why all the battles go against them; the Iga and Koga have been enemies before.

Nobunaga's most skillful strategist, Lord Hideyoshi Toyotomi, directs the attention of a young captain to a demon perched in a tree nearby. He then introduces the young captain to a priest, Ryoan, who comments that it is time he himself left for Iga and departs chanting unintelligible sutras.

Nobunaga and Ranmaru meet to discuss preparations for a major battle. Matters are complicated by the prohibition placed upon demons entering Iga territory due to a ward placed on the land.

At the Iga stronghold, the last survivor of an attack collapses after he tells of the slaughter ordered by Nobunaga. The debate over the trustworthiness of the Kogas continues. Unexpectedly, Kayo (the girl who had earlier saved Ayanosuke and Ryoma) arrives to represent the Koga. She tells them that although some of the Koga clan have fallen to Nobunaga, others oppose him. The leader of the Iga, Sandayuu Momochi, discloses that Kayo is really his sister, sent to be reared among the Koga. However, he believes what she says only because both the Iga and the Koga believe in the prophecy of evil and have been preparing to fight it.



The council decides that since the presumably allied Koga lands protect their back, it would be advantageous to attack Nobunaga now. Sakon, not trusting the Koga, refuses to participate and walks out.

Ryoma approaches Kayo in the compound later and apologizes for Sakon's behavior. Her resemblance to his sister is not lost on Ayanosuke.

Lord Momochi speaks with Ayanosuke and Ryoma alone, telling them that the Iga cannot win this war. They have failed to lure Nobunaga out, but the Iga must still keep fighting. More importantly, he continues, the legend of the three swords, Yotoden, is true. The three blades are the key to destroying the evil, and the bearers of the blades must go to Koya to learn more about the prophecy.

Unexpected Betrayal

The Iga launch their attack on the main compound of Nobunaga's forces, but they have been anticipated and are cut down by musket fire. Sakon's suspicions of a spy have been justified. Oblivious to the massacre, Jimbei heads to join the Iga attack.

Sakon is walking away from the battle when the illusion of the demon Genzo in the guise of Jimbei snares him. Sakon makes little resistance, and only the chattering of the monk Ryoan interrupts Sakon's trance and enables him to destroy the beast. Ryoan tells Sakon that his doubt cripples him and Sakon admits, before curtly cutting the priest off, that he does not know his path in life.

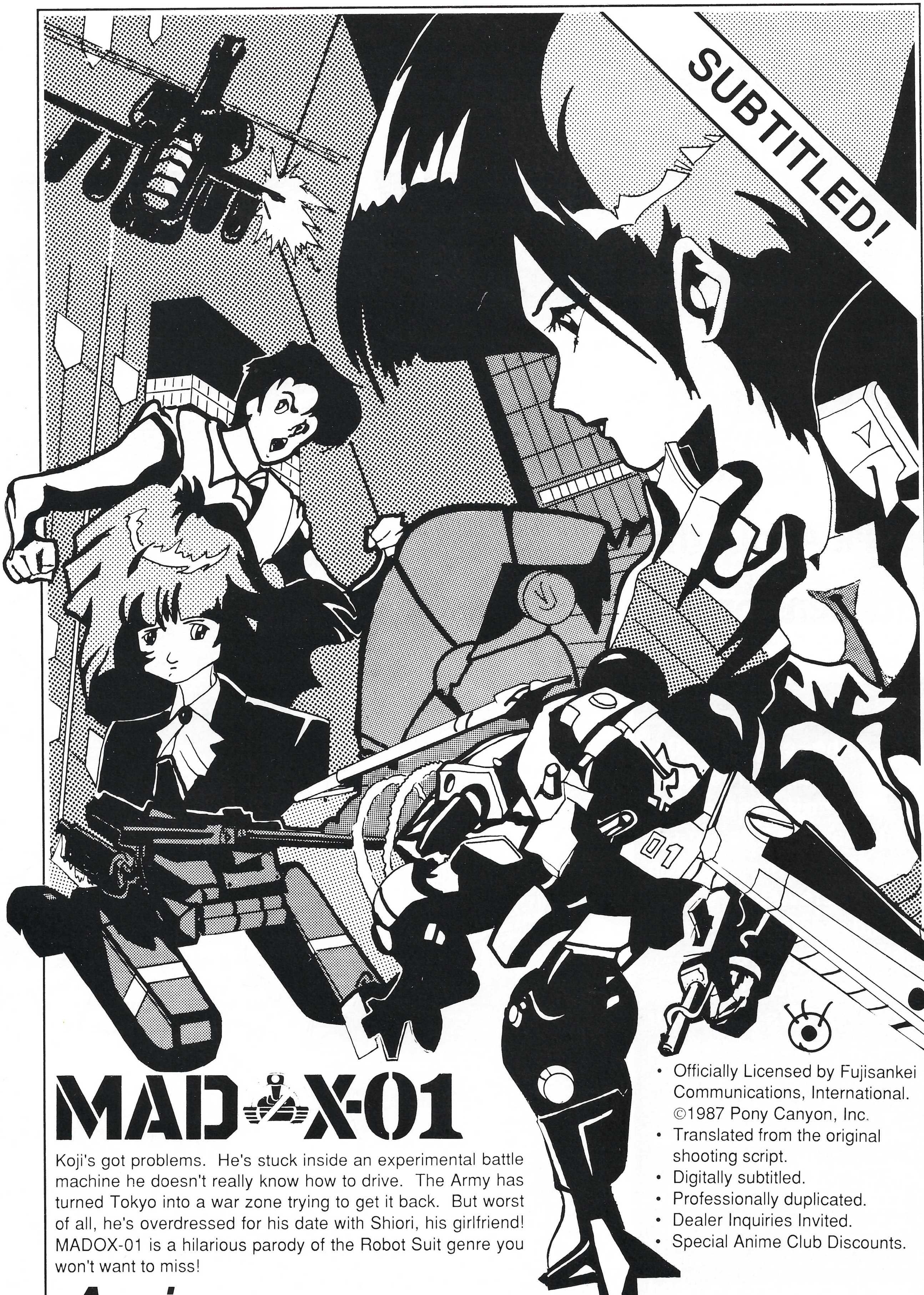
Ayanosuke, Ryoma, and Lord Momochi return from the doomed battle to find the Iga stronghold in flames. The Koga did not guard their back after all; indeed, their supposed allies have betrayed them. When Ayanosuke finds the cruelly blinded Jimbei, he confirms their betrayal by the Koga before being impaled by a spear hurled from a nearby bluff.

The traitor is Kayo, but as a demon bulges out of her body it is obvious that she has been possessed, her action controlled by the demon Masago of Kira. Lord Momochi tries to cast a spell at the demon, but only succeeds in burning Kayo's clothes away. Crying that this is his battle, he tells Ayanosuke and Ryoma to get away quickly.

"If this was destined," he cries to his sister, "please die with me!" The demon destroys Momochi's body, but is not prepared for the weapons hidden in the exploding corpse which strike him and the screaming Kayo.

Thinking the demon gone, Ryoma runs to Kayo only to be trapped by her contorting demonic form. Ayanosuke tries to help but realizes that the power of her blade will destroy Ryoma as well as the demon. Kayo is still conscious and begs Ryoma to kill her. Ryoma impales both her and her demon possessor with his spear. When the smoke has cleared, Ryoma sits on the scorched ground and remembers his own terrible loss.

Ultimately, all three bearers of the bewitched swords are safe. But Iga and its lord, having failed to stop Nobunaga and his demons, have been destroyed. And the passage of history is about to change again, for the comet of the prophecy approaches the earth once more . . . . ■



MADOX-01

Koji's got problems. He's stuck inside an experimental battle machine he doesn't really know how to drive. The Army has turned Tokyo into a war zone trying to get it back. But worst of all, he's overdressed for his date with Shiori, his girlfriend! MADOX-01 is a hilarious parody of the Robot Suit genre you won't want to miss!

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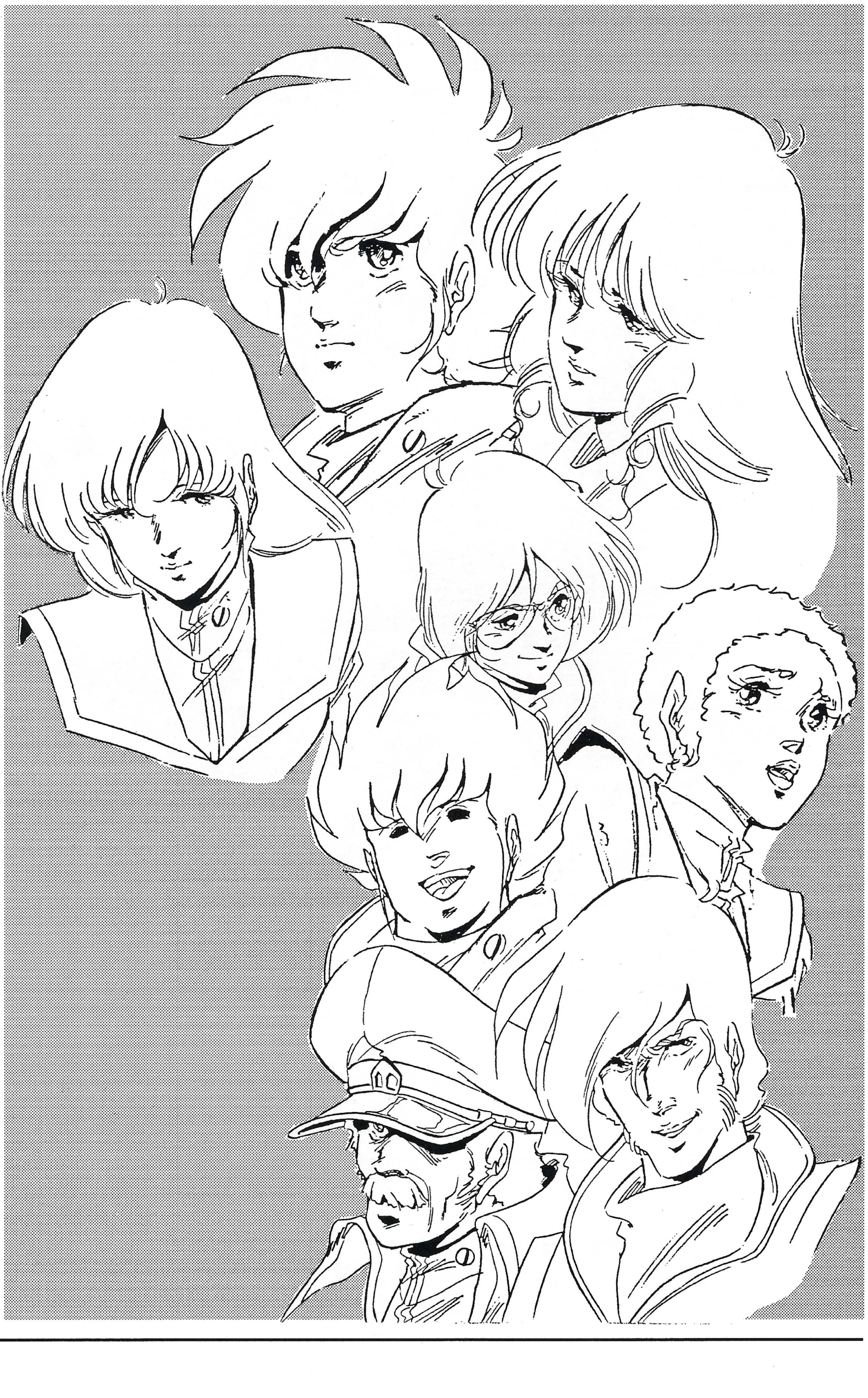
SUPERDIMENSIONAL FORTRESS
Macross

By David Keith Riddick, Robert Napton, and Byunghun Park

Shoji Kawamori & Haruhiko Mikimoto Talk About their Superdimensional Era



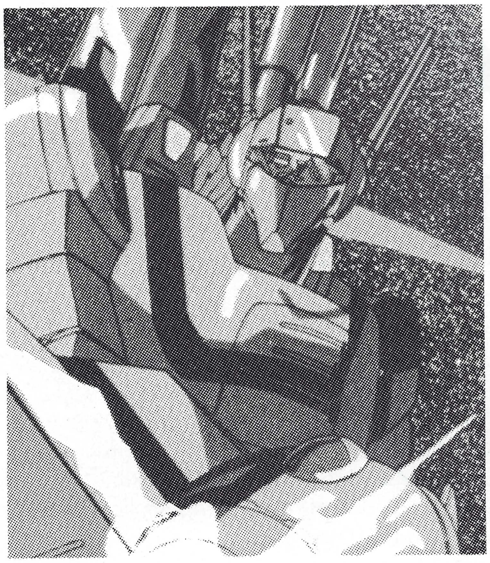
In the early 1980s, mecha designer Shoji Kawamori and character designer Haruhiko Mikimoto created an animated television series that would redefine the transformable robot genre.

Superdimensional Fortress Macross—or *Macross*, for short—sparked a phenomena of heretofore unknown proportions. Although there have been many animated features that have achieved similar or even greater success in Japan, only Macross has succeeded in gaining a devoutly loyal cadre of fans from around the world.

Macross is the story of Earth's war with the alien Zentraedi, a race of giants genetically engineered for combat. Defending Earth is the superdimensional fortress *Macross* with Captain Bruno J. Gloval, bridge officer Misa Hayase, hotshot pilots Hikaru Ichijo, Roy Fokker, and Maximilian Genius, and Chinese pop star Lynn Minmay aboard.

Macross (also known as the SDF-1) carries its 56,000 citizens into battle against the Zentraedi obsessed with recapturing it. The love triangle of Hikaru, Minmay and Misa is set against this backdrop.

Originally planned as a 26-episode series, *Macross* made its Japanese television premiere on October 3, 1982 and was extended ten additional episodes by popular demand.



These 36 episodes became instant classics, generating volumes of related products. "Lynn Minmay" became a celebrity in her own right among audiences who clamored to purchase her song collections as rendered by Japanese voice actress and singer Mari Iijima.

Macross was literally recreated in 1984 as *Macross—Do You Remember Love?*, regarded by many to be the most artistically detailed and technically superior film of its day. Around the same time the film premiered in Japan, work began in the United States on an English-language version compiled from three unrelated but similarly designed television series *[see Chronology for more details—Ed.]*.

Robotech, the product of *Macross*, *Southern Cross*, and *Mospeada*, first aired on American television in 1985. Through *Robotech*, *Macross* began generating international acclaim and was translated into several languages.

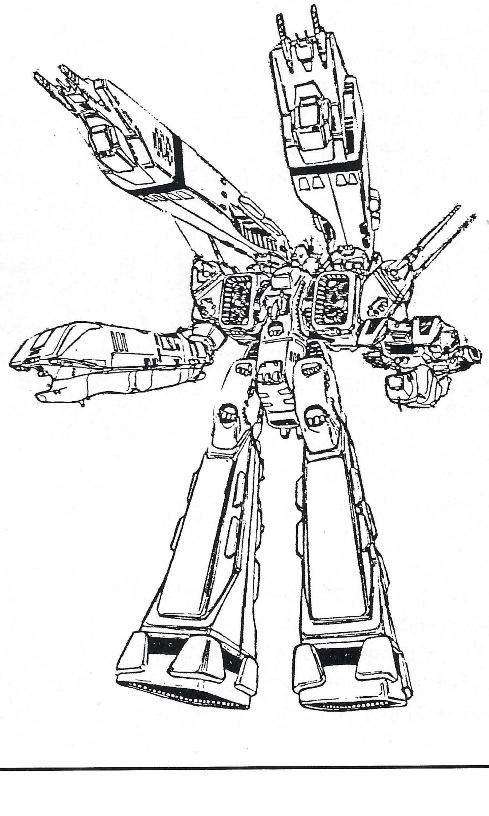
Harmony Gold U.S.A. (the U.S. producer of *Robotech*) distributed the series in France, where it became an instant hit. The first 36 episodes were the most popular. Among the plethora of merchandise were several soundtracks and singles featuring a main vocal theme in French. A translated version of the television series as well as a film version were also distributed in Brazil, where they achieved similar success.

In the United States, *Robotech* has generated more support merchandise than any other imported animation series. At present, the following are available: an English soundtrack on compact disc; a lengthy series of novels published by Del Rey under the name "Jack McKinney"; comic adaptations by Comico; an official fanzine called *Protoculture Addicts*, published in Quebec; an art book series; a graphic novel; a video sequel; and an unreleased film version.

Kawamori had the opportunity to see his creation during a mid-1980s *Wings of Oneamis* research trip to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum with producer Toshio Okada and his Gainax team. The group happened to be scanning television channels at a nearby hotel when they caught a rebroadcast of a *Robotech* episode. Okada recounts how slow and unnatural the American voices sounded to their ears.

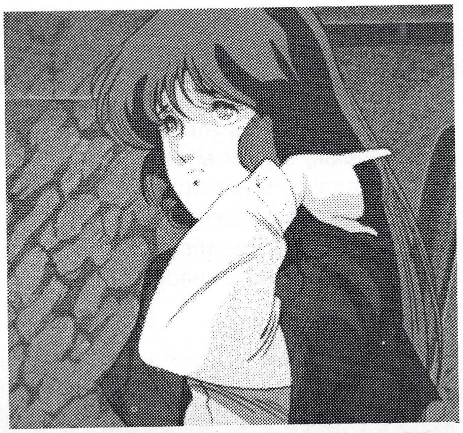
"O-h-h, M-i-i-n-m-a-a-y... " Okada joked to a silent Kawamori, reportedly even more subdued for the remainder of their trip.

Kawamori joined Studio Nue several years earlier in 1980 at the age of twenty. Studio Nue had been associated during the 1970s with such animated classics as *Space Cruiser Yamato*, *Space Pirate Captain Harlock*, and *Fighting General Daimos*.



By August of that year, Kawamori and Nue were in the developmental stages for a new animated television series conceived as an enhancement of the traditional transformable robot genre that maintained the "battleship" qualities of the popular *Yamato* film series.

The concept went through many revisions to become known in 1981 as *Superheavy Starship Megaroad*. That year, Mikimoto became the project's character designer and introduced Studio Nue to his creation, Lynn Minmay.



The *Megaroad*'s design, originally a battleship capable of transformation into a humanoid robot, would later evolve into the SDF-1 *Macross*. While in Megaroad mode, the battleship's main engines could be employed but its buster cannon (primary weapon) could not. Similarly, while in the humanoid "Bariantos" mode, the buster cannon could fire but the main drive was unoperational.

Megaroad was designed to contain a city on its deck that supported several hundred thousand citizens. Each of the 350-meter-long "arms," known as Daedalus and Prometheus, served as the main flight decks. The transformable single-seat VF-1J Starchild Valkyrie was designed as its fighter and was an innovation in the field of animation mecha because it could also transform into a humanoid robot *[see Mecha File elsewhere in this magazine—Ed.]*.

As the production became more fully realized it was clear that Nue would need additional help. Nue contacted fellow design house Artland's Noboru Ishiguro as well as Anime Friend's Ippei Kuri to become co-producers. Tatsunoko Productions (*Mach Go, Go, Go*, *Gatchaman*) agreed to distribute the series which had by that time been retitled *Superdimensional Fortress Macross*.

"Three months after *Macross* started, I didn't think it would ever get finished," Kawamori says. "But after six and then twelve months passed I started having fun, especially after two years when the relationship between Hikaru, Minmay and Misa became so closely interwoven."

Kawamori says that during those two years all he could think about was *Macross* and the impact it was having on his life. It was at this time that he decided to quit college to work on the series.

"I think I really bothered people by delaying the production schedule and demanding so much from my staff. I couldn't really imagine how hard it would be to work with other people. There are so many different positions and ways of looking at things. Actually, for the nine months of filming, I had more problems than fun."

Kawamori sums up his experience. "Through *Macross* I got to know a lot of people. I think I was lucky because I met so many good people and saw so many good things."

Mikimoto seems similarly at ease. "I don't have any regrets about the television series. I'm satisfied with what I've done so far because I feel that I did my best."

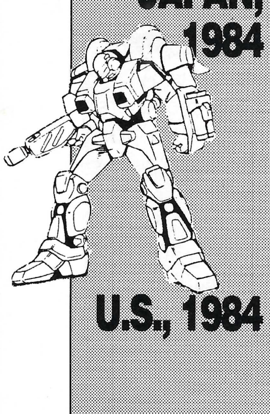
When the *Macross* series ended on June 26, 1983, work had already begun on the

MACROSS AND ROBOTECH—A CONCISE CHRONOLOGY

JAPAN, 1982 Originally conceived as a 26-week television series, the first of Tatsunoko's "superdimensional" series premieres October 3rd as *Superdimensional Fortress Macross*. Animator Haruhiko Mikimoto provides character designs

JAPAN, 1983 *Macross* ends its run June 26th ten episodes longer than expected; episodes #27-36 referred to as "outside story." On July 3rd next superdimensional series makes television premiere as *Superdimensional Century Orguss*. Despite similar Mikimoto designs and rumors to the contrary, *Orguss* is not the sequel to the popular *Macross*. On October 2nd the television series *Genesis Climber Mospeada* premieres featuring mecha and situations similar but separate from the superdimensional animation series

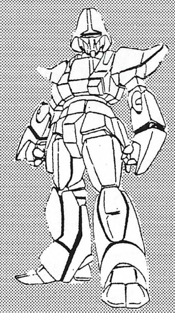
JAPAN, 1984 *Mospeada* proves unsuccessful in ratings and ends March 25th after 25 episodes. *Orguss* concludes April 8th after 35 episodes. On April 15th, final superdimensional series *Superdimensional Calvary Southern Cross* premieres. Feature-length film revising television series continuity and altering concepts and character designs released in theaters during July as *Macross—Do You Remember Love? Southern Cross* ends September 30th after 23 episodes



U.S., 1984 Harmony Gold USA acquires rights to several animated Japanese programs. Carl Macek employed to supervise production of English-language version of *Macross* television series. Decision made to release *Macross* via direct home video. In August, first *Macross* video "Boobytrap" premieres at the 42nd WorldCon, L.A. Con II. "Boobytrap" released in fall of this year

JAPAN, 1985 Current OAV era begins with successful release of *Megazone 23, Part One*, a feature produced exclusively for direct home video. Mikimoto and protégé Toshihiro Hirano (*Dangaio, Iczer-One*) provide character designs

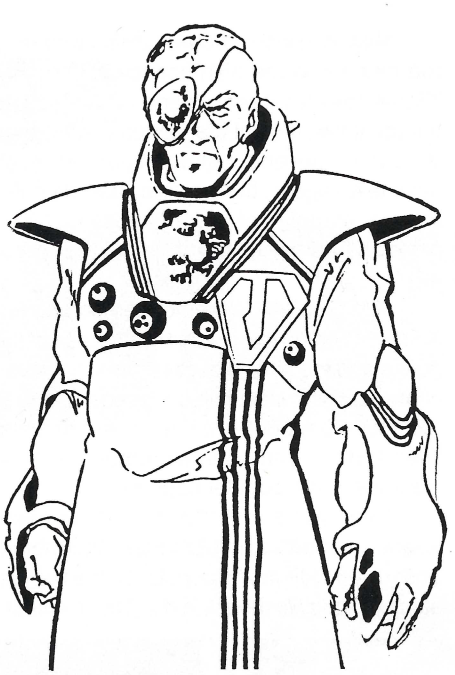
U.S., 1985 Macek and Harmony Gold produce *Macross* for U.S. syndication. To meet minimum 65-episode animated series syndication requirement Macek supervises editing of *Macross, Southern Cross* and *Mospeada* into one integrated story. "Robotech" selected as title to tie in with Revell's existing model line; series makes a March premiere in Los Angeles. By summer, *Robotech* airs in all major U.S. syndicated markets. Plans made for the *Sentinels* television sequel and for a movie utilizing animation from *Megazone 23*. Cannon agrees to distribute *Robotech the Movie*



JAPAN, 1986 *Megazone 23, Part Two* OAV, "Tell Me A Secret" released (directed by Ichiro Itano)

U.S., 1986 New *Robotech* projects in trouble. Macek supervises English dubbing of first *Megazone* into *Robotech* movie; initial dub rejected. Second version created incorporating animation from *Southern Cross* to link film into *Robotech* series. Idol animation studio hired by Harmony Gold to create ten minutes of new animation to be used in new ending. About the same time Tatsunoko promotion picture. "The plan for a movie version was already a rumor when I did the series," Kawamori says. "Along with the extension of the television series, there was this rumor of a movie. Another story was that the plan was to make the film new and different from the television series."

Those rumors became reality while the production of the original series was still commencing. "I was doing the twenty-fifth episode and was really busy, but they wanted me to do the first draft. It only took me two or three days to do it. The first half of the first draft was okay, but the latter half was too much like the television series. In the first half there was a scene with Hikaru and Minmay getting caught by the Zentraedi. Up until that scene it was the same as in the final movie, but after that it was really like the television version."



Kawamori struggled to make the film not just an imitation of the work he had done on the series. "I wanted some plot point that wasn't in the series. I added the Zentraedi and Meltrandi to the second draft and tried to make up a "protoculture" song.

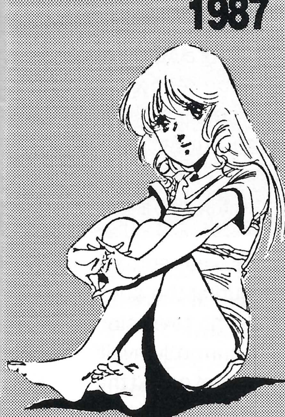
"I was working very slowly, but after I came up with that idea I started writing faster. After two-thirds of the script had been finished I really had a hard time on the last third because I couldn't get what I wanted, which was to make my own *Macross*. On the series I had a lot of staff join me; this time I wanted the image to be really unique. I wanted to make a different *Macross*."

Part of that difference would be in the revised look of the character and mechanical designs. Mikimoto reworked his original designs to alter the image.

"I think I emphasized the characters to be as real as possible," Mikimoto said during a 1984 interview. "Without the sound of the characters they're just pictures that move back and forth with no emotion. It was really hard

duces animation for first three episodes of *Sentinels*. *Robotech* movie test-marketed in Texas in August. Cannon shelves project shortly thereafter. Matchbox unveils *Robotech* toy line during fall. Poor sales lead to eventual withdrawal from *Sentinels* project, leaving Harmony Gold with only three episodes produced

JAPAN, 1987



Japanese companies release for educational purposes English-dubbed versions of *Macross—Do You Remember Love?* and *Megazone 23, Part Two* with Japanese subtitles. *Macross* dubbed in Hong Kong by Toho employing British and Australian voice actors. Harmony Gold's Intersound dubbing facility produces *Megazone* in the United States. In Japan, "*Superspace Fortress Macross*" in addition to foreign edition of *Megazone 23, Part Two* released uncut in English and subsequently imported to the U.S. Doubling as a preview for potential sequel, *Macross—Flashback 2012* released during the spring featuring Minmei music videos (edited from existing animation) and new, slightly older Minmei, Misa and Hikaru character designs. The new space fortress *Megaroad-01* and Valkyrie VF-4 also make an appearance

U.S., 1987

English-language versions of *Macross* and *Megazone 23, Part Two* arrive in U.S. and screened by eager animation fan groups across the country. *Megazone 23, Part Two* features *Part One* "bonus" animation at the beginning which is new ending animation originally created for *Robotech* movie. Although no English dialogue incorporated into either version both feature English narration as well as music from *Part One*'s "Four Spirits" image album. Peregrine Films buys *Superspace Fortress Macross* and edits about ten minutes, retitling the film *Clash of the Bionoids*

U.S., 1988

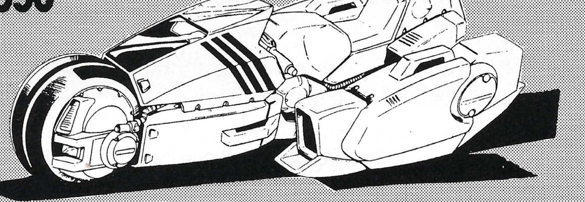
Peregrine incorporates *Clash of the Bionoids* with other dubbed animation films to create Dynamagic video label. Entire Dynamagic package sold to Celebrity Home Video and released domestically. Existing *Sentinels* animation released as one 80-minute pilot film on direct home video by Palladium Books

JAPAN, 1989

Release of *Megazone 23, Part Three* OAV "The Awakening of Eve," featuring Mikimoto's third incarnation of Eve

JAPAN, 1990

Release of next *Megazone 23, Part Three* OAV, "Emancipation Day"



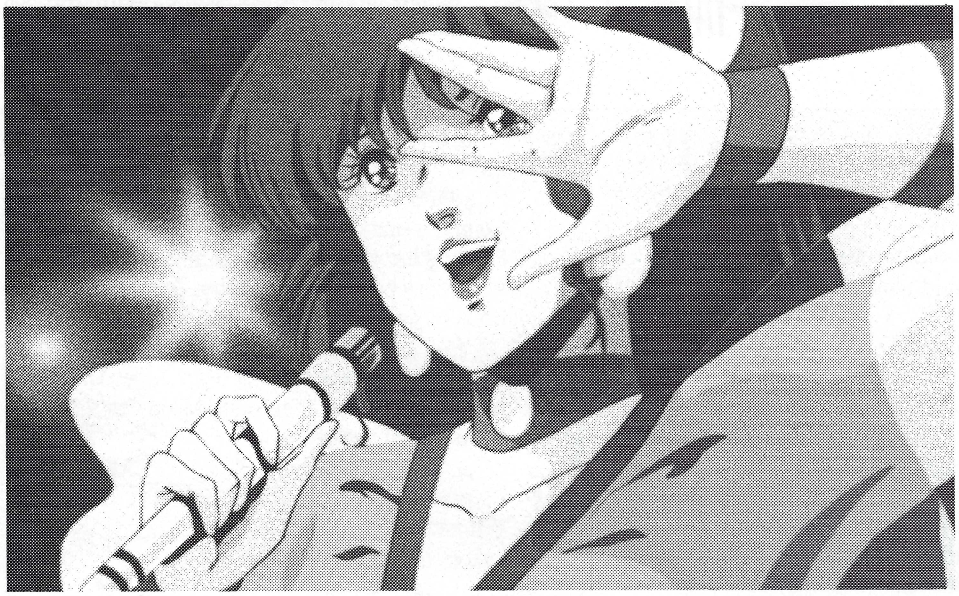
- No plans have been announced for the release of the *Megazone 23, Part Two* foreign edition to U.S. markets
- Rights to the *Robotech* movie currently tied up with Cannon; possible video release in the future
- As of this date Harmony Gold has no plans to continue *Sentinels* or any other *Robotech* project
- Although *Macross* movie sequel plans halted, original episodes scheduled to be rerun on Japanese television during summer of 1990

—David Keith Riddick and Robert Napton

for me to make these characters real, as compared to actual human beings, in details such as the size of the eyes or the length of the arms. I wanted to actualize the reality of existence as much as possible."

The difficulty of creating a character for film as opposed to drawing it naturally was an obstacle for Mikimoto. He discusses the revisions he had to make with the Zentraedi and the limitations of those revisions.

"The first time I rendered the Zentraedi, they were just general soldiers that were an extension of human beings. This time [for the film] Kawamori said he wanted to make them biologically engineered weapons, bred exclusively for war. People agreed that Bretai and Exedor needed minor changes, so I made a lot of changes in them. 'Weapons' in itself was too vague so I further defined them into 'chemical' weapons. In the movie, I tried to avoid having them move around too much because it takes so long for me to draw them that way."



Macross—Do You Remember Love? was released in Japanese theaters on July 21, 1984. The film augmented the original story, establishing a new continuity for its characters, and maintained the love triangle and superb mechanicals that had made the series famous in the first place.

Mikimoto comments on the many influences that led to the creation of this extraordinary film. "Movies consist of so many actors that interpret things in so many different ways. It's hard for a director to unify these thoughts into one common purpose. I think it's good for the movie to have a lot of people with different ideas—it makes the movie meaningful. Actually, this time I divided the entire work load so that three people would direct the film equally. I think it worked out very well."

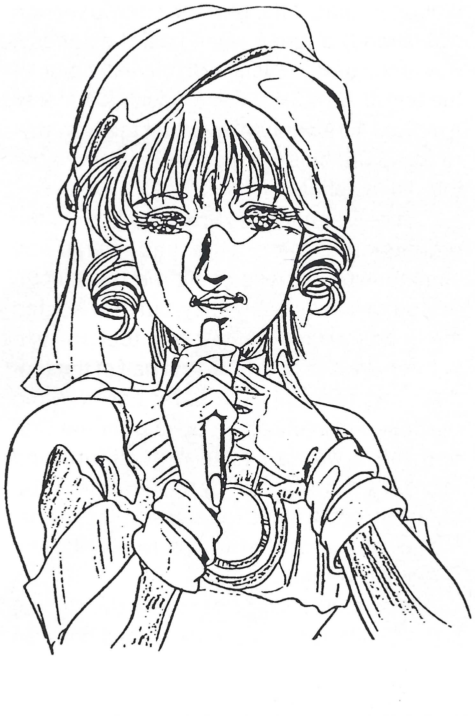
Mikimoto would debate those who read too much into the significance of the film. "Some say *Macross* is a serious love triangle but you know, it's not that serious. Kawamori is young, I haven't experienced that much despite my age . . . the movie is basically naive and not complex at all. *Macross* just happened to come up a warm-hearted, great movie."

Mikimoto and Kawamori temporarily left *Macross* behind them after the success of the series and the film. *Macross*' fans, however, continued to collect the countless *Macross* records, CDs, books, posters, and models. Even today, Lynn Minmay remains among *Macross*' most popular aspects.

Three years after the movie's release, Kawamori and Mikimoto created a final tribute. Based upon Minmay's popularity, the two created Macross *Flashback 2012*. The 30-minute OAV was released during the spring of 1987 and features animation from the series as well as MTV-style videos compiled from existing animation of Minmay's hit songs as voiced by pop vocalist Mari Iijima.

The team also created several minutes of new animation depicting what happens to the characters after the ending of the film, including a 30-year-old Minmay and a concert originally conceived as the ending for the film (production artwork for the original ending is reprinted in the costly and difficult-to-obtain *Macross Gold Book*). Adding to the excitement is the new battleship, the *Megaroad-01*, under the command of Captain Misa Hayase.

Hikaru Ichijo also makes an appearance in his Valkyrie VF-4, a completely new fighter Kawamori declines to describe as transforming. "I guess it does," he says reluctantly. "I thought it would be fun to make it different-looking." Kawamori says he didn't intend the new *Megaroad* to fly but eventually changed his mind for the sake of the video.



After a brief preview of the future of *Macross*' protagonists, *Flashback 2012* ends the story seemingly forever. When asked if he would like to draw *Macross* again, Mikimoto says, "Yes, maybe Minmay. As for Hikaru and Misa ten years later . . . I don't know. I think Hikaru and Misa probably get married and have children. Misa will possibly go into space as a captain."

For years there have been rumors in Japan as well as in the United States of a *Macross* sequel. Kawamori has gone on record as unwilling to do the project. At one point, there was discussion of doing the film without Kawamori and Mikimoto, but the idea could never really gain support within the Japanese animation industry.

The entire *Macross* series was rebroadcast on Japanese television during the summer of 1990. The series, plus the television specials about the show, are currently available as a special multi-laser disc set called the Macross Memorial Box.

Macross endures as one of the finest animated products of its decade, vividly redefining the genre of transformable robots and forever impacting the animation industry in Japan. Innovations in mecha design, combined with Mikimoto's captivatingly unique character designs, contribute to *Macross*' success as a universally compelling animated series.

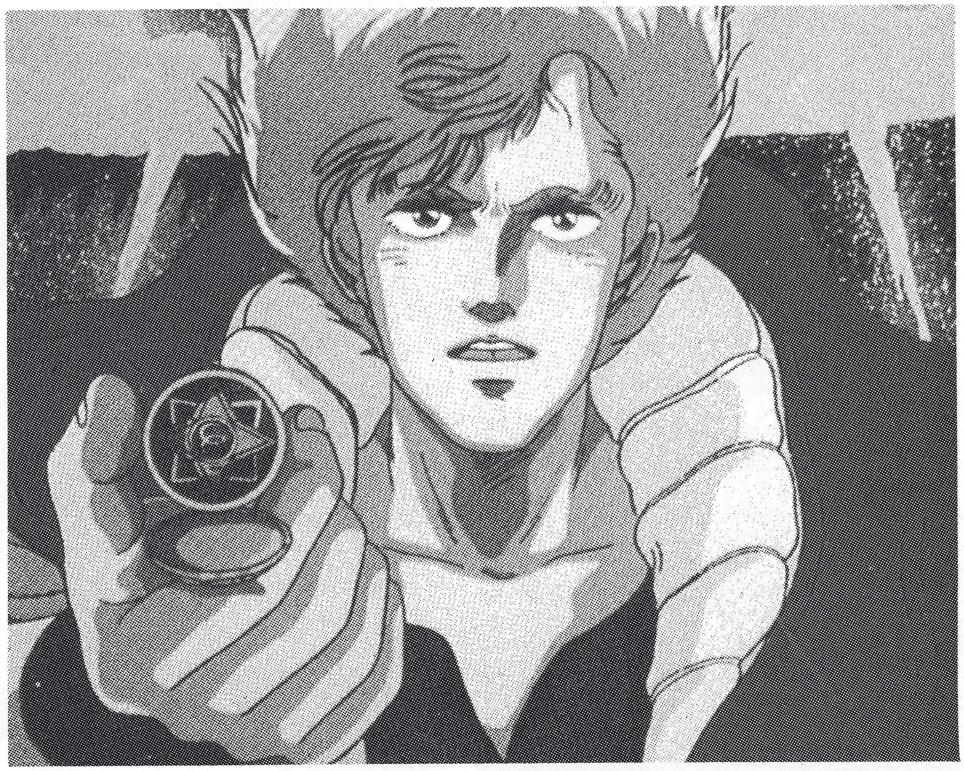
Simply stated, the series that began as a rough idea ten years ago among the innovators of Studio Nue has touched, and will continue to touch, the hearts of thousands. ■

Basic Saga

Salamander

By Dana Kurtin

Based on the shoot-em-up space game of the same title, the *Salamander* OAV series features designs by Haruhiko Mikimoto and an extended story line. The pilot protagonists of the game are given names and personalities, while the plot explores the fight against the planet Salamander and the evil Bacterians.



When Studio Pierrot was commissioned to make an animated show, Mikimoto agreed to design the characters even though he had no connection with the original game. Tatsuharu Moriki created new mecha based on the game's fighter planes, while Kasusane Hisashima's script created the story behind the battle. Directed by Nagayuki Toriumi (*Gatchaman*, *Area 88*), the first video was released by Konami (yes, that's right, the video game manufacturer) in 1988.

The first OAV begins on the planet Lattice, as a prophecy of doom heralds Salamander's approach. Salamander was an ordinary planet until it was invaded by Bacterians, planetary parasites with their sights set on Lattice. To save Lattice its prince, Lord British, must accept the help of three heroes who saved the rival planet Gradins from Salamander's attack.

The heroes—Eddie, Stephanie, and Don—agree to help Lord British defeat Salamander and the dragon spore housed within it. Eddie defects from the team when he learns that his ancestors were exiled from Lattice, but finally comes to the trio's aid when they manage to penetrate Salamander's deadly surface. As Eddie sacrifices himself to the dragon, Lord British destroys the planet's cyberbrain.

The second segment in the series is a prequel to the first, detailing Stephanie, Eddie, and Don's fight against the Bacterians on their home planet of Gradins. Stephanie's father is absorbed by the Bacterian brain and Stephanie must kill the brain—and her father—to defeat the alien menace.

The third video is the last segment of the trilogy, and shows the final battle between Lattice and the Bacterians. Stephanie, like her father, is sucked into Salamander's alien brain. Don and Lord British, their planets still at odds, must reunite to save Stephanie and eradicate the Salamander spore. The romance between Lord British and Stephanie is finally resolved as Lord British decides to face his responsibilities as ruler of Lattice.

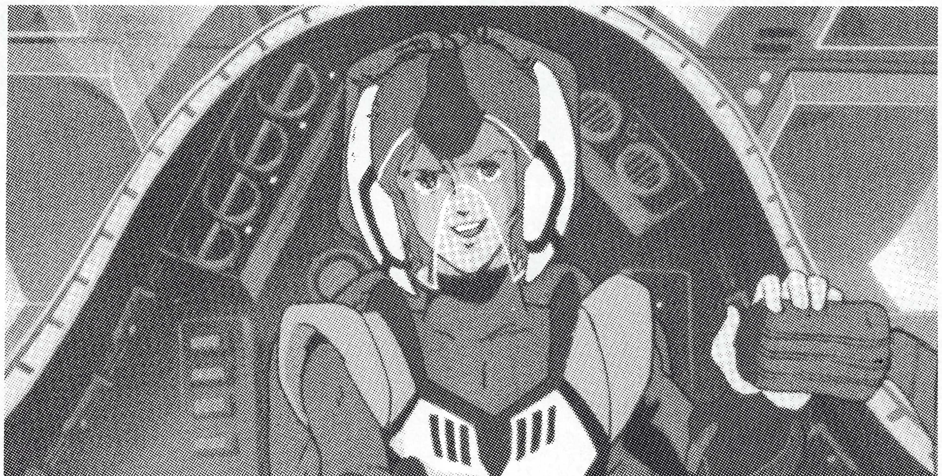
Each 50-minute *Salamander* video is designed to appeal to lovers of action, adventure, and romance. Fans of Mikimoto will especially enjoy the *Salamander* trilogy for its character and costume designs, while those who play the *Salamander* game will get a better sense of what they are fighting every time they battle the deadly Salamander. ■

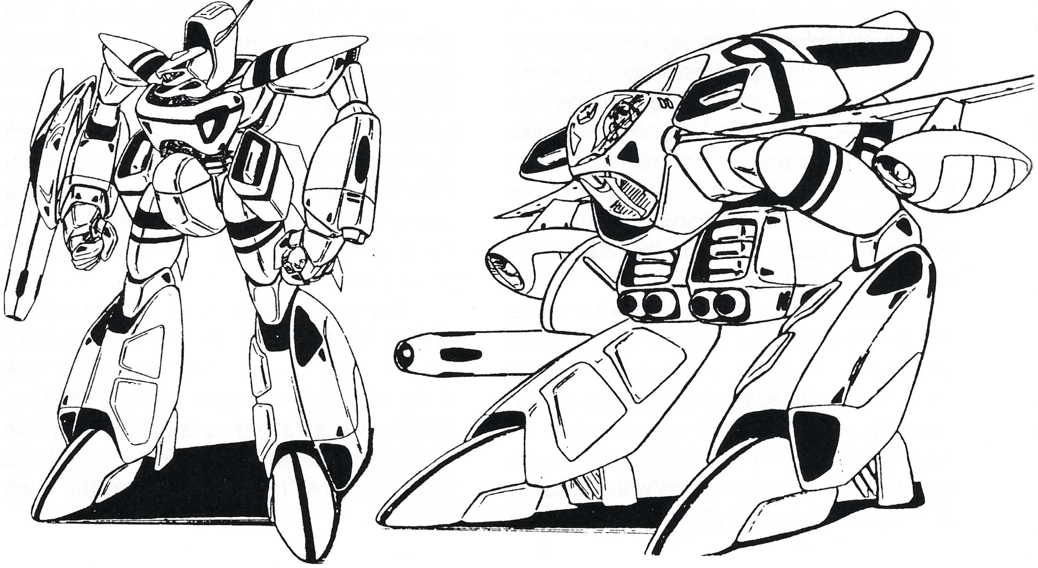
SUPERDIMENSIONAL CENTURY

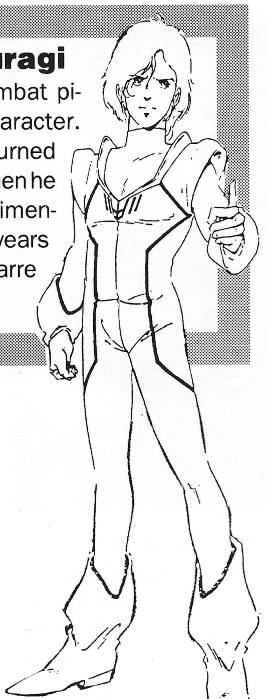
Orguss

By Calvin Wade

1983 was a good year for fans of the giant robot genre, bringing such shows as *Aura Battler Dunbine*, *Superdimensional Space Fortress Macross*, and another entry in the "superdimensional" milieu, *Superdimensional Century Orguss.*

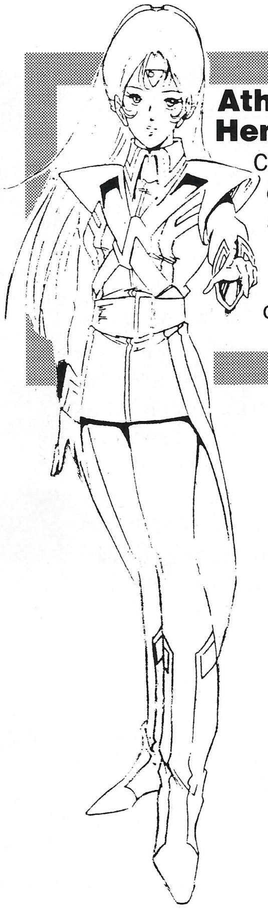






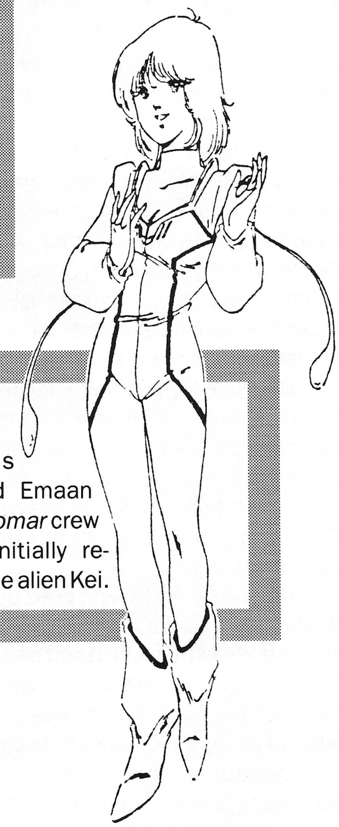
Kei Katsuragi

19-year-old combat pilot and main character. Kei's life is turned upside down when he is hurled by a dimensional warp 20 years forward to a bizarre future Earth.



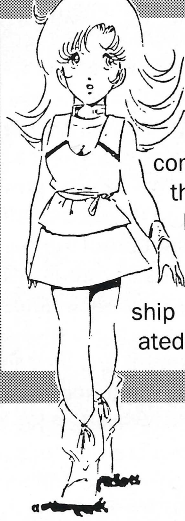
Athena Henderson

Crack 19-year-old enemy pilot. Athena is also Kei's toughest adversary and paradoxically, his adult daughter.



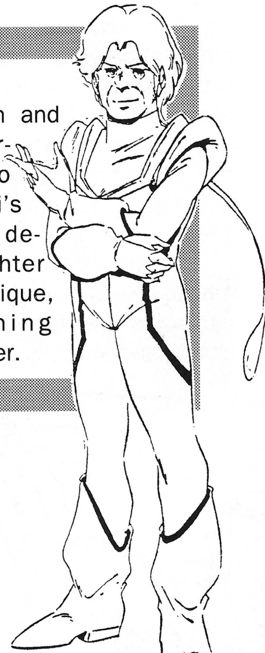
Mimsy Laarz

Capricious 17-year-old Emaan girl and *Glomar* crew member initially repelled by the alien Kei.



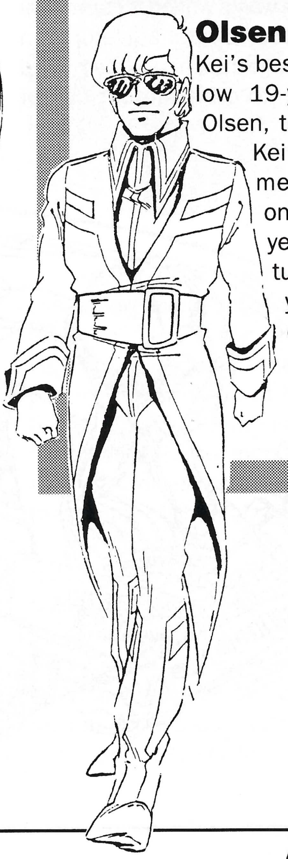
Mome

Diminutive green-haired android created as a servant/companion/mechanic for the Mu race of cyborgs. Mome is Kei's companion from the outset of their relationship and becomes infatuated with him.



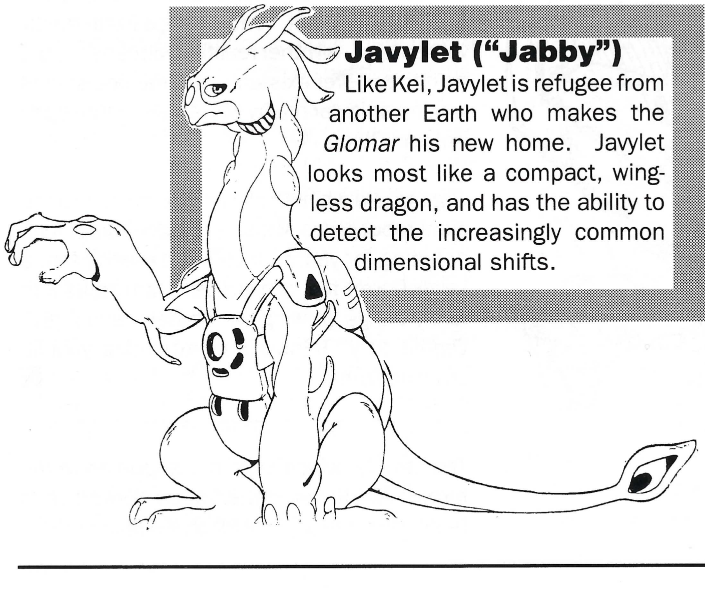
Leegh

Male Emaan and mecha virtuoso who modifies Kei's partially destroyed fighter into the unique, transforming Orguss fighter.



Olsen Bern

Kei's best friend and fellow 19-year-old pilot. Olsen, transported with Kei by the same dimensional warp, only travels fifteen years into the future and is a 24-year-old member of the Terram military when he meets Kei once more.



Javylet ("Jabby")

Like Kei, Javylet is refugee from another Earth who makes the *Glomar* his new home. Javylet looks most like a compact, wingless dragon, and has the ability to detect the increasingly common dimensional shifts.

Orguss was released as the second entry in Tatsunoko's superdimensional series. Tatsunoko's first entry was *Superdimensional Space Fortress Macross*, and the third was *Superdimensional Calvary Southern Cross*.

Many fans in the United States who watched the television show *Robotech* may not have been aware that they were seeing not one program but three distinctly separate ones that shared a similar theme, *Macross*, *Southern Cross*, and *Genesis Climber Mospeada*, which was not a part of the superdimensional series even though it featured similar characters and situations.

Because *Orguss* character designs were done by Haruhiko Mikimoto, it has been widely assumed that Orguss was somehow related to the wildly popular *Macross*. Besides a superficial resemblance, however, *Orguss*' story line is unrelated to any other of the Tatsunoko series.

Orguss ran for 35 episodes between July 3, 1983 and April 8, 1984, only one episode less than *Macross*, which had been extended from its original 26 episodes to 36 because of high ratings. *Orguss*, however, never managed to achieve the same popularity.

Despite a lack of widespread popular success or perhaps because of it, *Orguss* is felt by many to be arguably even more imaginative than its predecessor. The engaging story line, catchy theme song, and bizarre "Jabberwocky"-influenced names caused *Orguss* to find a soft spot in the hearts of often uffish American fans.

In the year 2062, a war is waged for territorial jurisdiction over the "orbital elevator," an 8,000-meter-tall cargo transport system used to send objects into orbit without use of spacecraft.

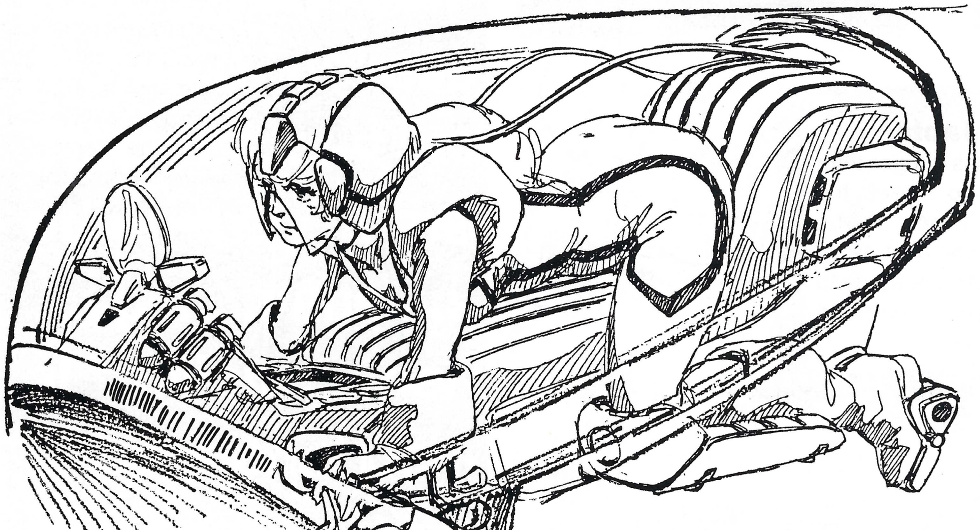
Kei Katsuragi and his friend Olsen Bern are two fighter pilots assigned to cover technicians arming a bomb capable of dimensional warp, code-named "chocolate parfait monster." The bomb is abandoned by its technicians when the enemy wages a heavy assault, and when Kei and Olsen discover it at the base of the orbital elevator, Kei takes it on his own initiative to complete the arming sequence. The bomb detonates, hurling the two men forward into time.

Kei finds himself without Olsen on a bizarre future Earth fragmented into pieces inhabited by beings from several different "realities." The crew of a giant hovercraft called the *Glomar* rescues Kei after his crash landing and offer him sanctuary.

Glomar's predominantly female crew are members of a gypsy race known as the Emaan. The freetrader Emaan are virtually identical to human except for the manipulative tendrils extending from the nape of the neck.

After several attempts to return to his own time, Kei accepts his fate and joins the crew of the *Glomar*. From the very beginning, Kei is attracted to the Emaan girl, Mimsy Laarz *[one has to wonder whether the person who named her realized that, according to Lewis Carroll, "mimsy" is a portmanteau word meaning "flimsy" and "miserable"—Ed.]*.

Leegh, an Emaan technical virtuoso, modifies Kei's damaged Bronco-class fighter into a unique fighter with four-way transformation capabilities. Javylet, an alien who, like Kei, is a refugee from another Earth, names the fighter "Orguss" after his people's god of war.



Unknown to Kei, his arrival has been anticipated for the past five years by the Emaan, the Terrams, and the Mu. The Terrams are a ruthless, militaristic people later revealed to be the descendants of Kei's Earth, and the Mu are a race of cyborgs.

Orguss proves to be instrumental in the Emaan's survival against the attacking Terram, who are mysteriously bent on capturing Kei. Over the course of several attacks Kei encounters his friend Olsen, now several years older and an officer in the Terram forces.

Kei discovers that this new patchwork Earth is suffering from a greenhouse effect steadily raising the temperature of the planet, and that the cause of the deadly trend is a globe of dimensional energy now encircling the planet.

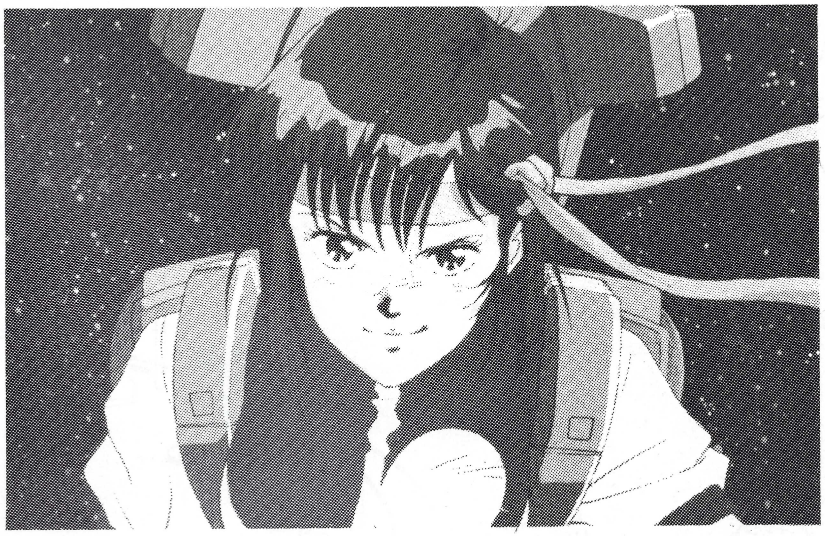
The Emaan, the Terram, and the Mu all seem to have a stake in capturing Kei, the reason for which is made clear when Kei discovers that he and Olsen are the "missing links" or keys to the stability and continued survival of the new Earth. If they should happen to be physically reunited with the so-called "big peculiar point," only a single Earth-reality will remain—all other realities will cease to be, as if they never existed—and the decision of which particular reality will remain will be up to Kei and Olsen.

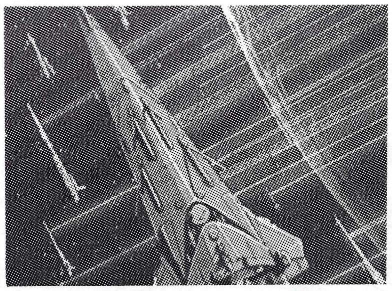
Orguss is a whimsically unique entry into the giant robot genre whose ending has kept fans debating for years. If you're a mecha fan, a Lewis Carroll fan, or even just a fan of girls with funny things growing out of their heads, give *Orguss* a try. Think of it as expanding your literary horizons. ■

This article, which originally appeared in the former Animag newsletter Ronin Network, has been rewritten slightly for this edition.

AIM FOR THE TOP! Gunbuster

By Dana Fong





Introduction

Aim For the Top! *Gunbuster* might, at first glance, be easily described as a cross between *Top Gun* and the Japanese animated television series, *Aim for The Ace!*, a popular sports action drama spotlighting physical competition between females.

On closer inspection, however, it becomes evident that *Gunbuster* is much more than a simple parody. Start with a traditional Japanese science fiction robot drama, fold in Haruhiko Mikimoto's dreamy, "cute girl" character designs, thoroughly mix in a healthy portion of humor and you've got *Gunbuster*, one of the most popular OAVs in years.

Originally released in three volumes containing two episodes each by Bandai/Victor beginning October 7, 1988, the *Gunbuster* trilogy is produced by Gainax, well-known for their previous work on the highly regarded *Royal Space Force, Wings of Oneamis*. Original character designs are by Haruhiko Mikimoto, with production character designs and animation direction by Toshiyuki Kuboka. Mechanical designs are by Koichi Obata.

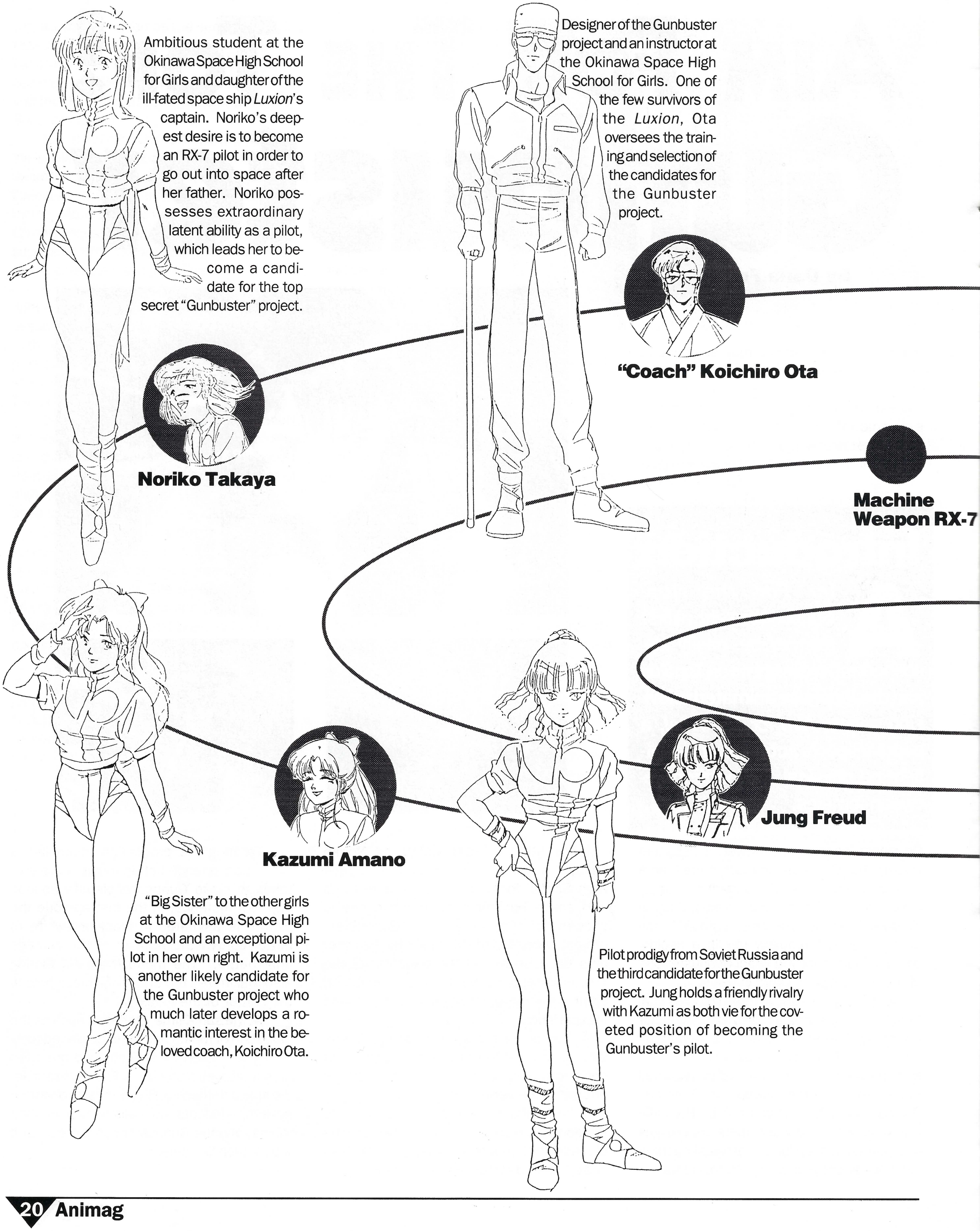
The story focuses on young Noriko Takaya, a student at the Okinawa Space High School for Girls, whose dream to go into space becomes reality when she is chosen for the top secret "Gunbuster" project. Accused of favoritism by the other girls because she is the daughter of the *Luxion*'s captain, Noriko must time and again prove her worth despite her youth and inexperience.

Creators of the six-episode *Gunbuster* OAV series wanted to make a giant robot show using simpler designs than others offered in the genre today.

"In *Gunbuster*, we're not going back to the good old days but merely sticking to the old rule that robots look better with less lines," says director Hideaki Amano.

Treating the production much like a live-action science fiction movie, care was taken to make *Gunbuster* visually appealing. For instance, in the last episode the picture is animated in black-and-white to better convey the realism of the climatic final battle. The monochromatic filming also maximizes the effect of a black hole in the center of the galaxy.

At the same time, elements such as the utilization of robots and other advanced technology are taken more lightly and are often presented with a comical twist. For example, the space battleship *Exelion* has its own train system, students do calisthenics in their robots, and the Gunbuster can protect itself with a cape-like shield.



Ambitious student at the Okinawa Space High School for Girls and daughter of the ill-fated space ship *Luxion*'s captain. Noriko's deepest desire is to become an RX-7 pilot in order to go out into space after her father. Noriko possesses extraordinary latent ability as a pilot, which leads her to become a candidate for the top secret "Gunbuster" project.

Noriko Takaya

Designer of the Gunbuster project and an instructor at the Okinawa Space High School for Girls. One of the few survivors of the *Luxion*, Ota oversees the training and selection of the candidates for the Gunbuster project.

"Coach" Koichiro Ota

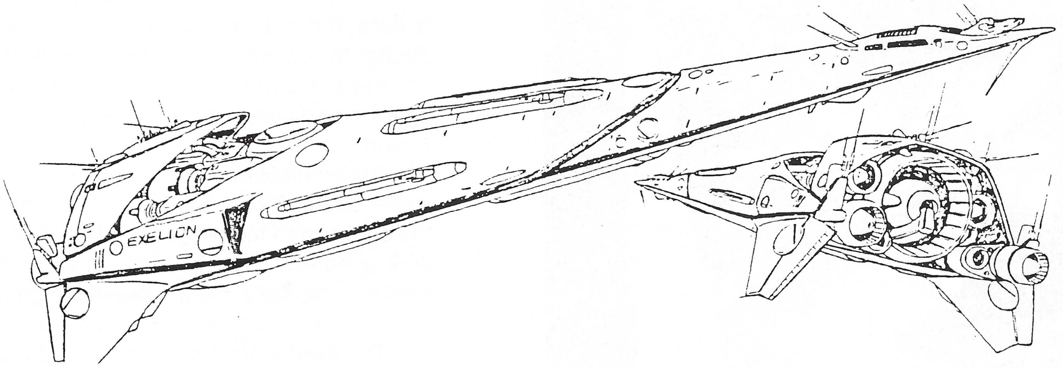
Machine Weapon RX-7

Kazumi Amano

"Big Sister" to the other girls at the Okinawa Space High School and an exceptional pilot in her own right. Kazumi is another likely candidate for the Gunbuster project who much later develops a romantic interest in the beloved coach, Koichiro Ota.

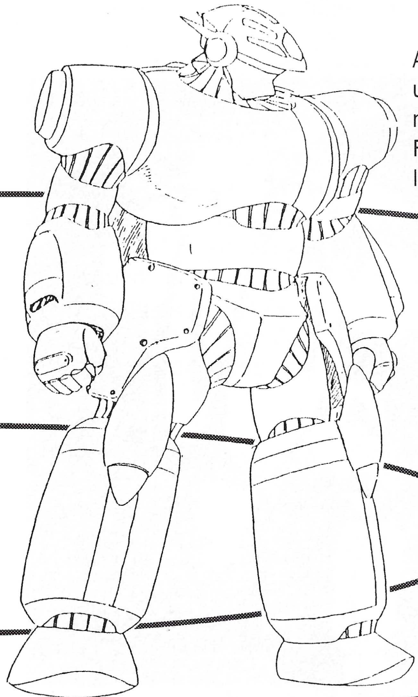
Jung Freud

Pilot prodigy from Soviet Russia and the third candidate for the Gunbuster project. Jung holds a friendly rivalry with Kazumi as both vie for the coveted position of becoming the Gunbuster's pilot.



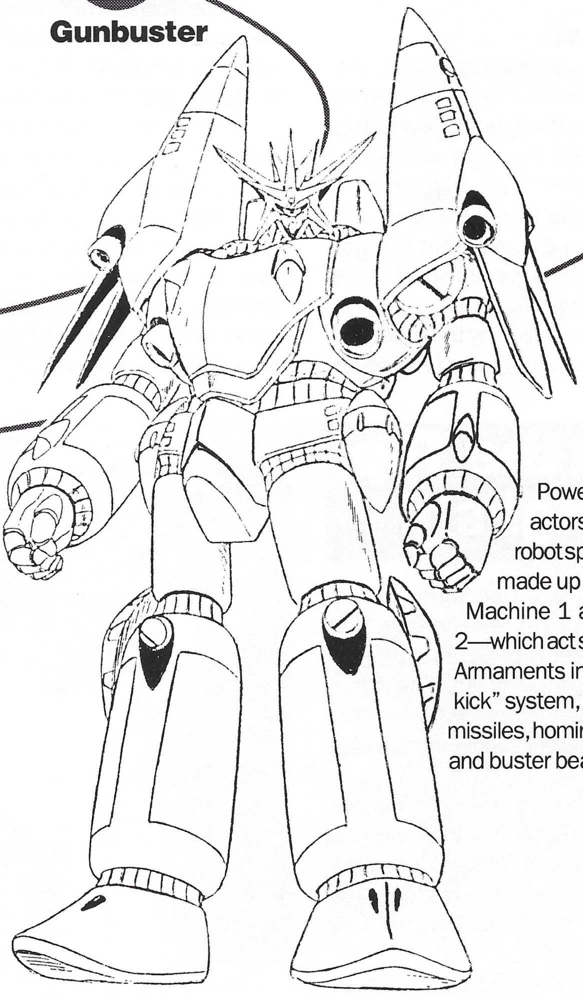
Exelion

Fourth in a line of ultra-light space battleships, *Exelion* is the flagship of the Earth Space Force. The ship measures approximately eight kilometers in length and is large enough to merit its own built-in train system. *Exelion* is eventually replaced by the much larger 70-kilometer-long *Eltreum*. In the fifth episode, the *Exelion* is destroyed to create a black hole in order to defeat an approaching force of aliens.



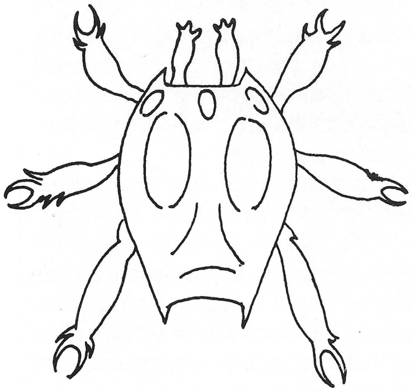
An approximately 10-meter-high robot used both as a trainer and a fighter and main weapon of the Earth Space Force. Armaments include a plasma lance and a californium bomb.

Gunbuster

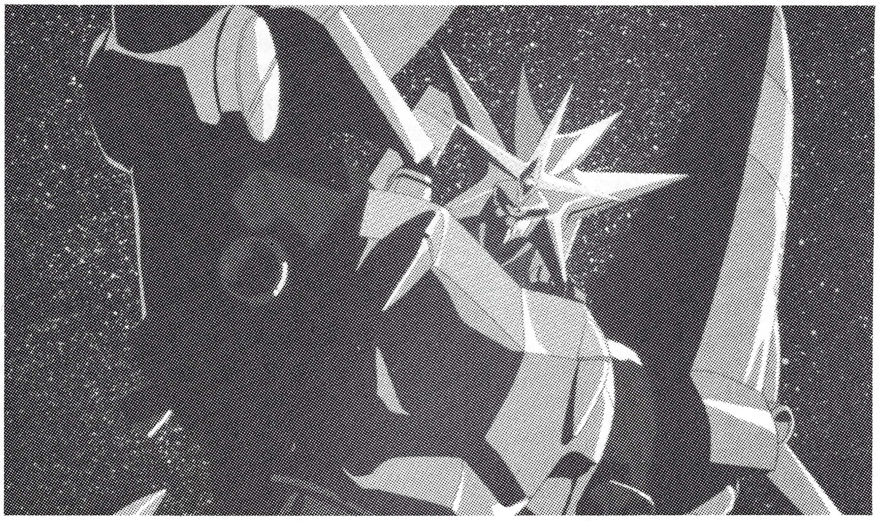


Powered by two fusion reactors, this 250-meter-high robot sports a modular design made up of two units—Buster Machine 1 and Buster Machine 2—which act separately as fighters. Armaments include ultra "lightning kick" system, buster collider, finger missiles, homing laser, buster shield, and buster beam.

Space Monsters



Parasitic creature who reproduce by in pregnating their egg into stars, destroyin the star in the incuba tion process. Thes aliens (so-calle "space monsters' appear in various size from approximately 6 meters (resemblin huge ticks) to ove 1,000 kilometers.



Synopsis

In the year 2015, man's first ultra-light spaceship, *Luxion*, comes into contact with alien life in the Perseus arm of the galaxy. The encounter proves deadly as the "space monsters" attack and destroy the *Luxion* fleet. Unable to abandon his ship, Captain Takaya insists that one of his officers, Koichiro Ota, escape.

Six years later.

At the Okinawa Space High School for Girls, 16-year-old Noriko Takaya is having difficulty adjusting to the rigors of piloting the "machine weapon" RX-7 despite advice from her idolized "big sister," Kazumi Amano.

After humiliating herself in practice, Noriko is shocked to discover that she has been chosen, along with Kazumi, as a candidate for the top secret "Gunbuster" project. Faced with being ostracized by the other students, who feel she was unfairly favored because of her father, Noriko receives intense training from Coach Ota to prove that she is worthy.

The true test comes when Kashiwara, one of the former possible candidates, challenges Noriko to a duel. Initially unable to counter Kashiwara's attacks, Noriko seems sure to lose but performs a "lightning kick" that surprises everyone and soundly defeats her.

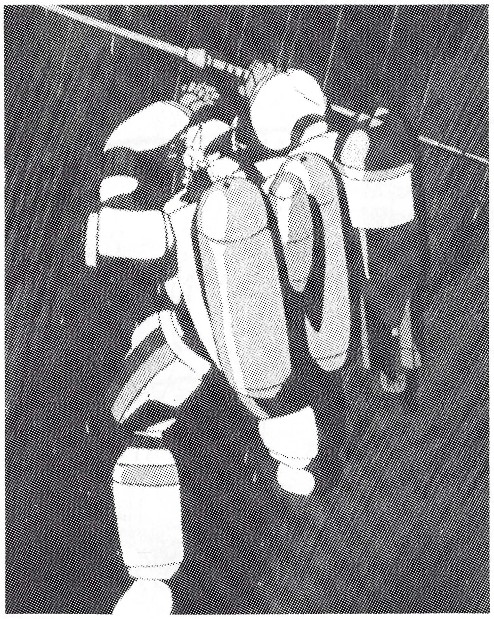
After a big send-off, Noriko, Kazumi, and Ota take a shuttle flight to join other RX-7 pilots destined for the Earth Defense Force's space battleship, *Exelion.* They arrive at the space station "Silver Star," where they are welcomed by Captain Tashiro and the third Gunbuster candidate, the Soviet girl Jung Freud.

Later, during training exercises, Jung aggressively challenges Kazumi to a duel. However, the two appear to be equal in ability and the fight is a draw. Jung later proves her rivalry to be friendly, saying she only wanted to see how skillful Kazumi was.

In the meantime, an unidentified object is detected speeding at near light-speed through the edge of the solar system. Noriko and Kazumi accompany Coach Ota to investigate and discover that the object is the *Luxion.*

Noriko disobeys orders and enters the ship to search for her father. Upon arriving at the entrance to the bridge, she finds only a gaping hole where her father once commanded. Noriko's actions cause the group to return six months later than scheduled.

The *Exelion* and its accompanying fleet warp through space to encounter the enemy. Along the way, the enemy fleet crosses their path, so the *Exelion* decides to loop back and attack the enemy fleet from behind.



Aim for the Top! . . . in English!

In January of 1990, U.S. Renditions (a subsidiary of Books Nippan) released the first volume of *Aim for the Top! Gunbuster,* subtitled for the first time in English. The video, according to U.S. Renditions, was modeled after the original release in conjunction with the original studio.

The video features easy-to-read computer-generated subtitles that do not interfere with the animation, but allow the English-speaking viewer to follow the dialogue and story. The video is complete in its original form with one exception—the second "Science Classroom" sequence was deleted for editing/length-of-time considerations. According to script editor Robert Napton, the sequence is not lost and may appear as a special bonus clip on U.S. Renditions' *Gunbuster,* Volume Two.

Translations for *Gunbuster* were handled by Deborah Grant, Ken Iyadomi, and Yuki Nakajima. Other U.S. production staff consist of Robert Napton, David Keith Riddick, technical advisor/dialogue consultant, and Upton S. Redmondton, U.S. production supervisor.

According to Napton, intentions of the U.S. Renditions production team are to complete the three-volume *Gunbuster* series, and then possibly produce English-subtitled versions of other recent OAV hits. At this point, no production dates have been set for further releases, but look for announcements to be made later this year.

—Karl Altstaetter

At this point Kazumi decides that she no longer wants to be Noriko's partner. Another pilot that Noriko met earlier, Smith Toren, offers to take Kazumi's place. Noriko loses her newfound partner and romantic interest during her first sortie.

A surveillance report shows that the enemy reproduces by impregnating stars, destroying them in the process. It is conjectured that the aliens are like white blood cells, the human race the disease spreading throughout the universe.

Noriko receives private training from Ota on piloting the Gunbuster, much to the ire of Jung and Kazumi. However, Noriko can't seem to get over the death of Smith Toren and lacks the courage to go into space to fight.

"She'll die the next time she goes out into space," remarks Jung to Kazumi.

Captain Tashiro orders the fleet to return to Earth. During the warp the enemy attacks once again and before it can be prevented, the enemy discovers man's home system. A battle ensues and the *Exelion* fleet takes heavy damage.

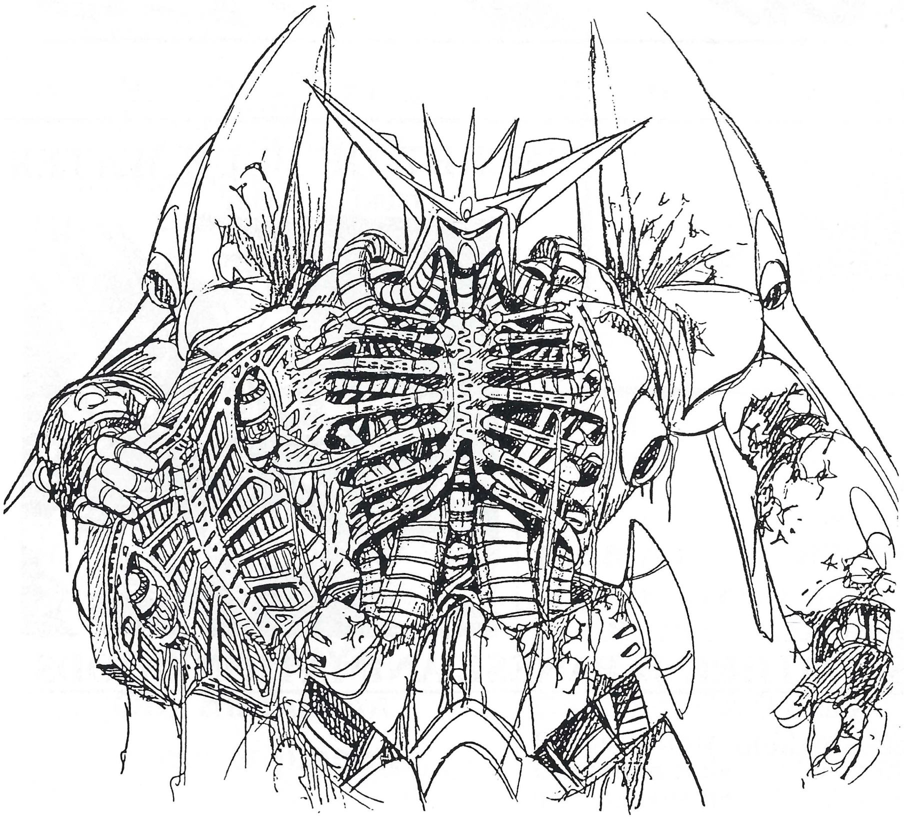
Gathering her courage, Noriko launches into space in the Gunbuster, engaging the enemy mother ship head-on at point-blank range, apparently sacrificing her own life. The enemy ship explodes, and when the smoke clears, a battered Gunbuster stands alone triumphant. Earth is safe . . . for now.

Upon returning to Earth, Noriko and Kazumi are graduated from their school in Okinawa. Although it has been only four months in space for them, ten years have passed on Earth.

Elsewhere, a huge enemy force is detected at the edge of the solar system. As the heads of Earth's military argue over what course to take, Ota proposes that they send the damaged *Exelion* into the middle of the enemy forces and detonate its warp drive reactor to create a black hole and eliminate them.

Noriko and Kazumi are given the task of escorting the ship with the Gunbuster. As they near the enemy force, Kazumi becomes reluctant to continue. The farther they travel, she reasons, the more the inevitable time dilation will increase the difference in time between themselves, the Earth . . . and Ota, who is dying of radiation sickness.

Eventually Noriko is able to convince Kazumi to continue, and together they fight against the enemy forces long enough to allow the *Exelion* to get into position and detonate. A black hole is created, the enemy forces are vanquished, and Earth is saved once again. Kazumi returns to her beloved Ota.



Gunbuster Timeline

1995	R. Tannhäuser publishes "The Study of Ether Electromagnetism of Moving Objects," basis for the ether theory that predicts the existence of Tannhäuser Gates
1998	NASA completes its "Atlanta" space station
2002	Micro black holes WGA-1.1 & 1.2 discovered
2003	Tannhäuser Gates discovered at the center of WGA-1.1 & 1.2
2006	Noriko Takaya born; Japanese heavy industry chemical complex announces their "Luxion" plan
2012	NASA hands over jurisdiction of its space station to Japan renamed "Silver Star"
2013	Earth imperial constitution announced, space force established, and man's first ultra-lightspeed spaceship, *Luxion*, completed
2015	*Luxion* shipwrecked 21,000 parsecs away in the Perseus arm of the galaxy
2017	South Columbia University succeeds in experiments with the photon torpedo
2019	Machine weapon RX-1 completed
2021	Noriko Takaya enters Okinawa Space High School for Girls
2022	Fourth-generation space battleship *Exelion* completed; *Exelion* fleet destroyed at the Battle of Leaf 64
2032	*Exelion* destroyed
2033	Fifth-generation space battleship *Eltreum* completed
2048	Black hole bomb Buster Machine 3 detonated in the center of Milky Way galaxy
14292	Noriko Takaya and Kazumi Ota return to Earth

—*Translated from* Newtype *Magazine by Yoshiyuki Karahashi*

Fifteen years pass on Earth.

An older Kazumi Ota returns to space to pilot the huge black hole bomb to Earth's forces on their way to the enemy nest in the center of the galaxy. She rejoins with a relatively unaged Noriko, who has spent her dilated time in space fighting the enemy.

As the massive Earth forces near the enemy nest, they are opposed by an even larger enemy force. A huge altercation ensues. Earth forces attempt to set off the black hole bomb, but damage caused during the battle makes it impossible to detonate remotely.

Noriko and Kazumi volunteer to detonate the bomb using one of Gunbuster's two fusion reactors. Entering the huge black hole bomb, Noriko rips the fusion reactor out of Gunbuster and thrusts it into the "slave" generator, starting a chain reaction which detonates the bomb.

In the year 14292, Noriko and Kazumi speed at sub-light to return to Earth *over 12,000 years later*, where they are warmly welcomed home. ■

Space Travel According to Gunbuster

In *Gunbuster*, various scientific principles are presented. Some of these principles are based on actual existing theories while others have been created completely from the imagination of the video's creators.

According to the world of *Gunbuster*, the universe is based on the theory of ether (a concept proven incorrect in reality, but which is in any case the medium in which light travels).

Just as sound travels through air, *Gunbuster* logic reasons, light travels in ether, with which the universe is filled. Ether exists at a temperature of 3 degrees Kelvin (-270.15 Celsius, -454 Fahrenheit).

Warping is a jumping of time and space from one point to another in the time-space coordinate. In *Gunbuster*, the Tannhäuser Gates are used to accomplish this process. Tannhäuser Gates are created when multiple black holes orbit each other and a singularity in space is created. In order to power the equipment capable of controlling such power, self-collapsing materials are used. One example of this material given in the science lecture is ice$_2$.

When traveling at speeds comparable to the speed of light, many bizarre things happen as governed by the Lorentz transformations and Einstein's theory of relativity. The most important aspect of the theory used in *Gunbuster* is that when traveling at very high speeds, time appears to move slower for the traveler seen from a stationary observer. This has the effect of causing what is known as the "twin paradox," wherein the traveler experiences a relatively short amount of time and the stationary observer experiences a longer amount.

—*Yoshiyuki Karahashi*

New Type
Hobbies and Toys

ZERO

1/6 Scale Priss "Bubble Gum Crisis"
1/28 Scale Ex-Garland Moto Form "Megazone 23" Part 3

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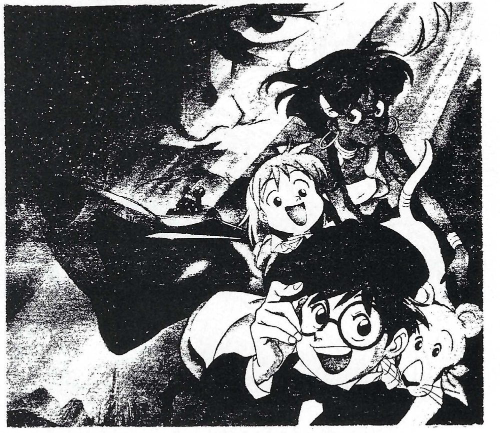

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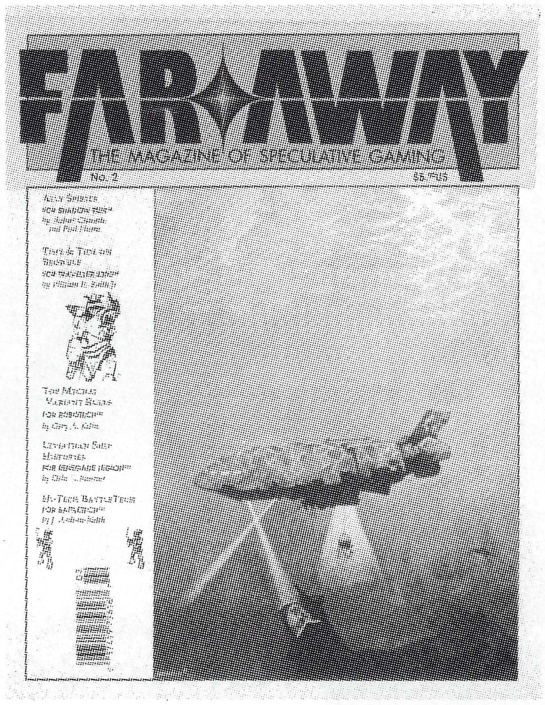

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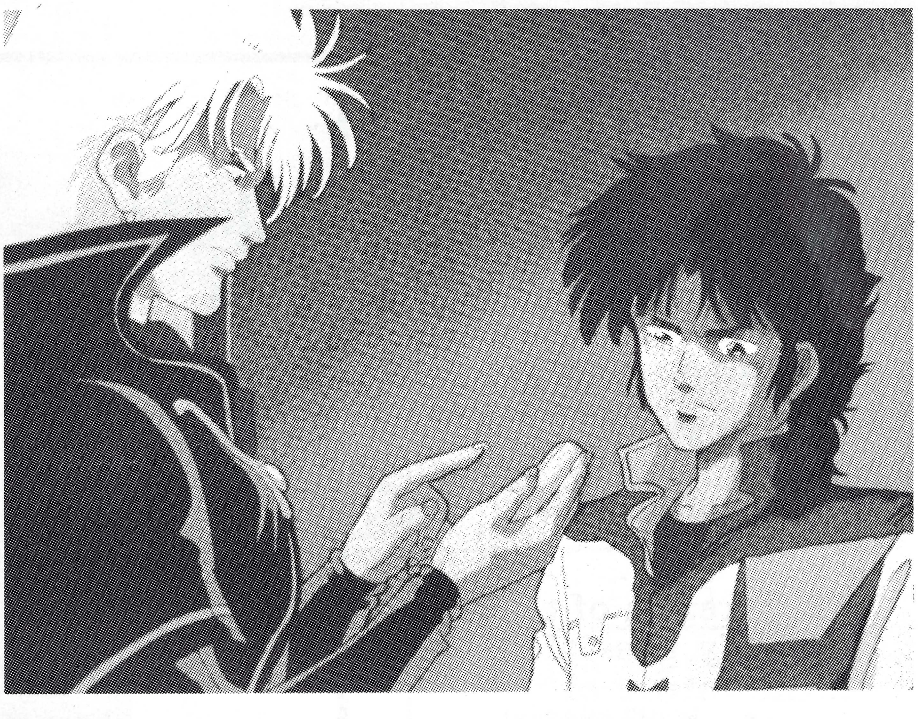
HIGH SPEED Jecy

By Dana Kurtin

High-Speed Jecy was originally a series of novels by Eiichiro Saito with illustrations and cover by Haruhiko Mikimoto.

Now, for VAP Video's OAV series, Mikimoto has contributed designs for the four major characters (Jecy, Tiana, Folk Green and Paolon) with Akinobu Takahashi designing the rest of the cast. Production is by Pierrot Studios, who also worked on another project linked to Mikimoto, *Salamander.* Directed by Shigenori Kageyama (*Baldios, Goshogun*), each volume of the series contains two 30-minute episodes.



Haruhiko Mikimoto's Latest Entry into the Fast-Paced OAV Arena

The first OAV, "Prologue," opens in Luden City, capital of the planet Vall. Jecy has tracked a Bismarck ship to Vall, only to lose it there. When Jecy prevents Folk Green from "purging" some criminals, Folk first confronts and then, as a woman asks for their help, joins him.

The woman, Trelaine, is in fact a decoy sent by the Bismarcks, and while Jecy and Folk are trying to rescue her from her "kidnappers," Tiana is abducted from their hotel. When Jecy and Folk return, a message in Trelaine's voice tells them to come to the planet Ganet.

Jecy and Folk voyage in Paolon to Ganet, where Jecy confronts Jela and Cross, leaders of the Bismarck clan. Jela tells him that the only way to win back his sister is to go into the Swordhorn Valley and bring back "a blue rock." Jecy, allowed to pick a single weapon, chooses an antique revolver and heads into the chasm.

The second OAV, "Mobius," explains that the Swordhorn Valley contains lyzinium, a tremendous power source that the Bismarcks want to exploit for their own use. The Bismarcks have sent hundreds of men into Swordhorn, but none have come back alive. Once in the chasm, Jecy discovers the problem—lyzinium is like a mirror, and when the soldiers fired at their own image, their lasers came bouncing back. Since Jecy has a revolver, the bullets only chipped the lyzinium and left him unharmed.

Meanwhile, Paolon is confronted by the Bismarck fleet but simply transports away from their firing range.

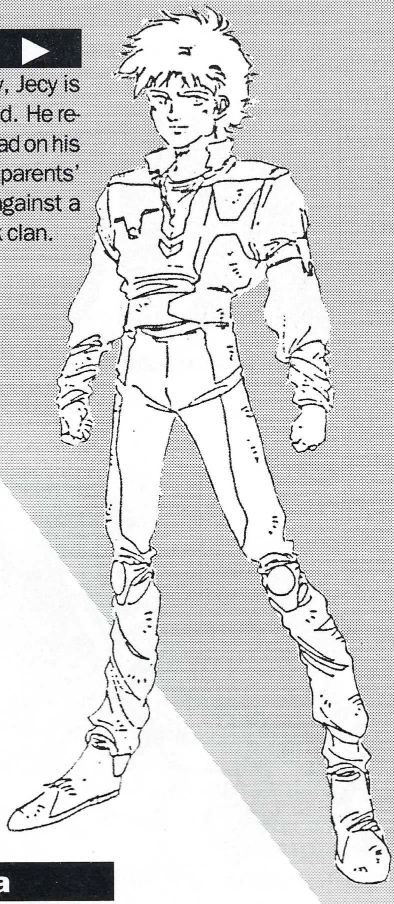
When Jecy returns to Jela, she refuses to give him Tiana until he produces the lyzinium. Since he hasn't brought any, a fight breaks out, and when Paolon sees Jecy is in danger, he beams down Folk Green. With this diversion, Jecy, an unconscious Tiana, and Folk escape across the barren planet. At the crucial moment, Paolon beams them aboard.

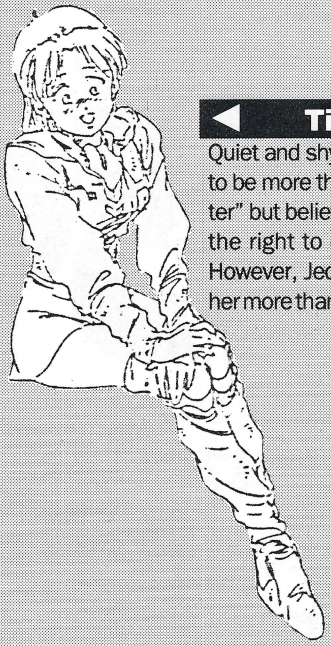
Paolon informs Folk that lyzinium is useless to humans in any case, since it is unstable. As Jecy remembers his long-ago birthday when a Bismarck cruiser destroyed his family's passenger ship, Paolon deftly demolishes the following Bismarck fleet by reflecting back their destructive beams, and heads out into space.

High-Speed Jecy exhibits many of the characteristics that have made OAVs so popular. The animation quality is notably high, and the story becomes gradually more complex as the series continues, every ending a cliffhanger. Although *High-Speed Jecy* has yet to achieve the same popularity as other OAV series with the Mikimoto touch (notably *Gunbuster* and *Gundam 0080: War in the Pocket*), it is an interesting and well-crafted science fiction adventure in its own right. ■

Jecy Moore ▶

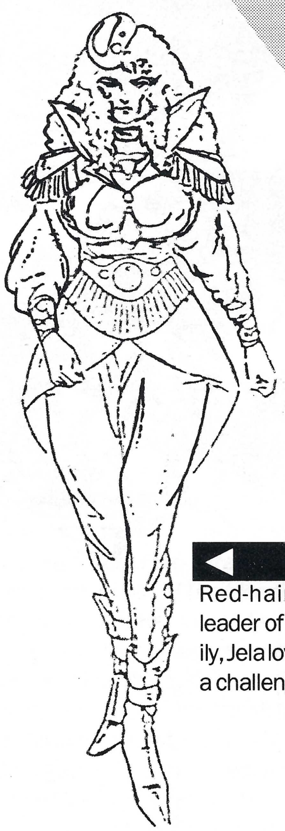
Gifted with incredible speed and agility, Jecy is never able to resist helping those in need. He refuses to carry a weapon and relies instead on his natural skills. Haunted by his past, his parents' death forces him to seek vengeance against a vastly more powerful foe: the Bismarck clan.





◀ Tiana

Quiet and shy, Tiana yearns to be more than Jecy's "sister" but believes she hasn't the right to earn his love. However, Jecy may care for her more than she knows . . .

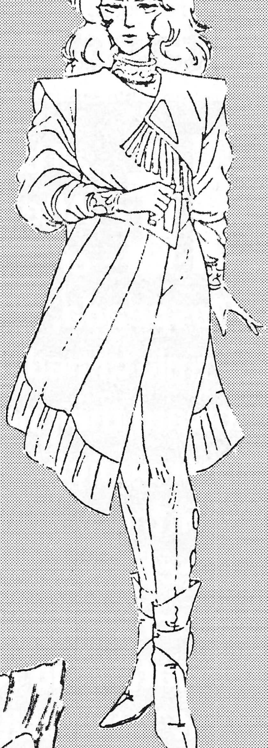


◀ Jela

Red-haired, voluptuous leader of the Bismarck family, Jela loves only two things: a challenge, and power.

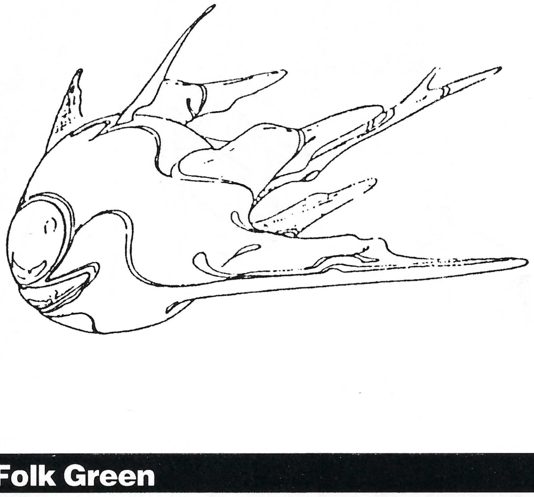
Trelaine ▶

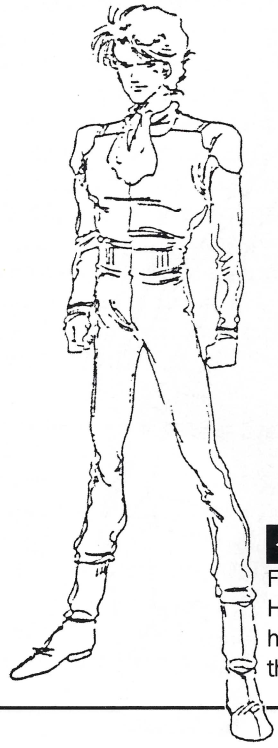
One of the Bismarcks sent as a decoy to test Jecy and to capture Tiana.



Paolon ▼

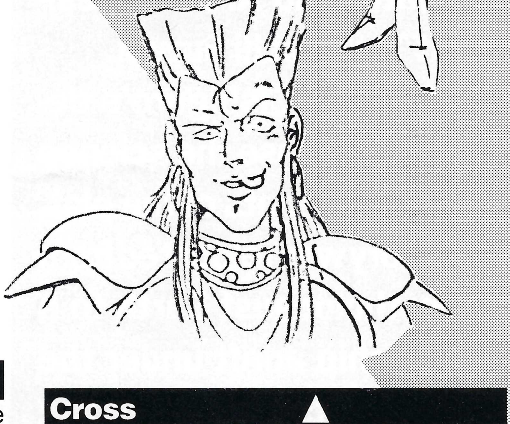
Jecy's living spaceship, designed millions of years ago by an alien race, who communicates to his human passengers via a hologram of a distinguished older man. Like Jecy, Paolon is a pacifist and does not understand why humans want or need weapons.





◀ Folk Green

Folk has an irreverent sense of humor and a healthy ego. A priest of the Heartland sect, Folk believes it is his sacred duty to help criminals reach heaven through a slow, painful death. As he says, "The greater the pain, the greater the pleasure once you get to heaven."



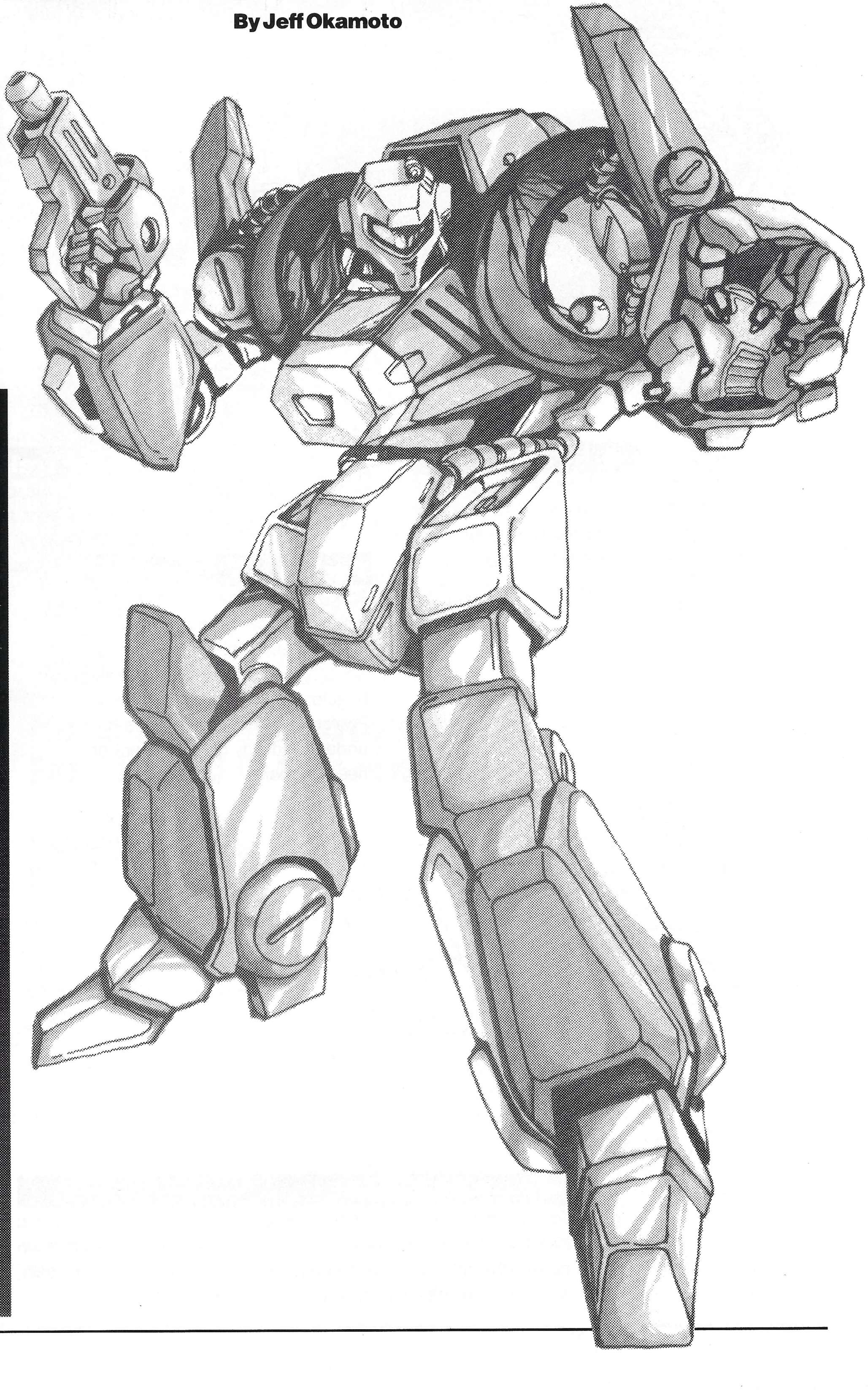
Cross ▲

Jela's little brother, Cross is a dandy, sporting earrings and a red streak in his hair. He loves combat and bears an ongoing grudge against Jecy.

Megazone 23 Part One

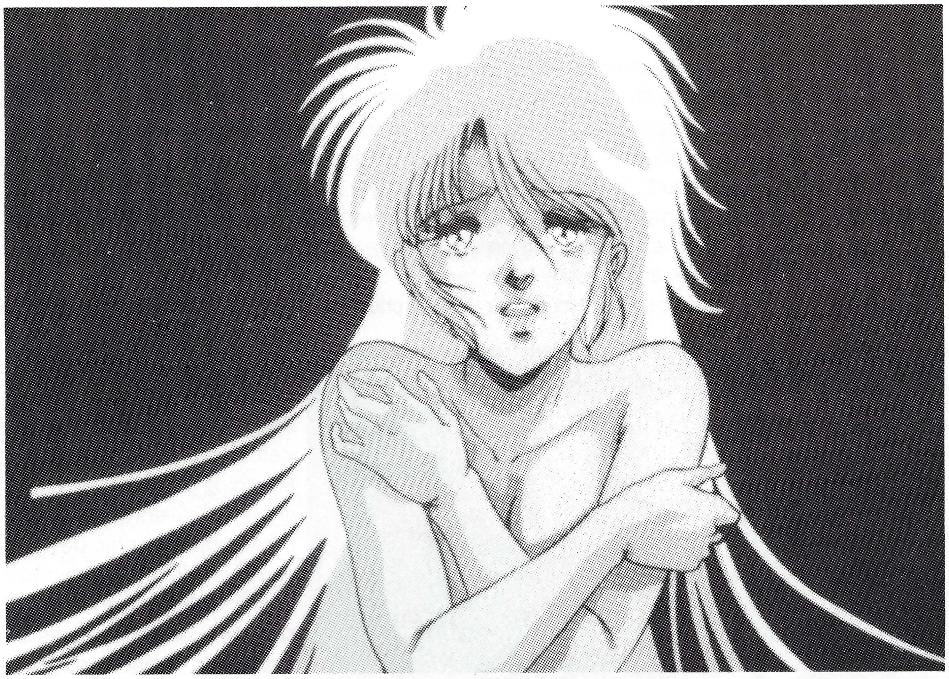
By Jeff Okamoto

The OAV Pioneer That Set a New Industry Standard



It all began in 1984. After the success of *Genesis Climber Mospeada*, design studio Artmic turned their thoughts toward their next project, a science fiction story based upon the original concepts of director Noburo Ishiguro (*Macross*, *Space Cruiser Yamato*) and Artmic president Toshimichi Suzuki.

To reflect Ishiguro's desire to increase the science fiction elements of the plot, the story was relocated from a postholocaust Earth to a spaceship adrift under the control of its still-functioning main computer.



"Omega City," as it was tentatively titled, was planned as a weekly half-hour television series. Mechanical designs for the 26-episode series were assigned to animation design house Artmic, with character designs and actual animation by popular animators fresh from *Macross*: Toshihiro Hirano (*Dangaio*, *Fight! Iczer-1*), Ichiro Itano (*The Ideon*, *Violence Jack*) and, of course, Haruhiko Mikimoto.

As the technological and philosophical themes of the computer-controlled city were explored, "Omega City" was transformed into "Vanity City Galliard." All that remained was to secure the pending approval of the series' sponsor. Success seemed just around the corner.

Until the sponsor went bankrupt.

"Vanity City" was put on indefinite hold during May, 1984. The prospect of ever completing the project looked grim. What no one expected, however, was that "Vanity City" was to be saved by the new direct-to-video format called "original animation video," or OAV for short.

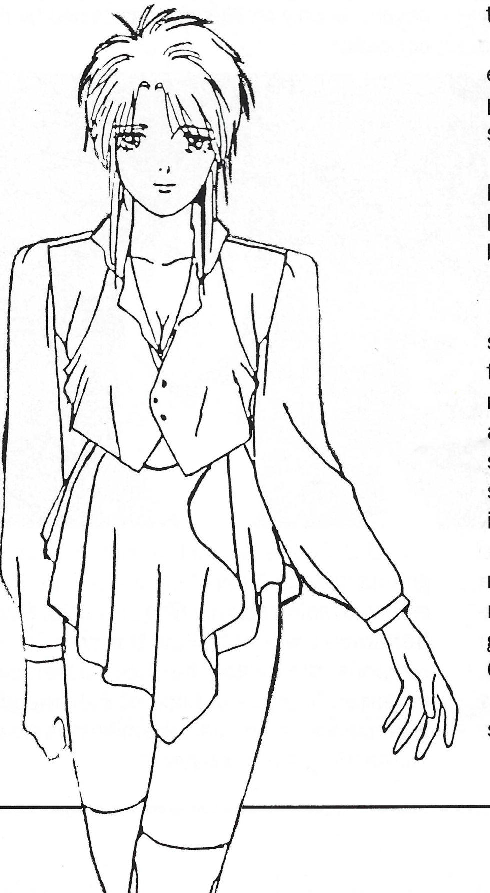
The first OAV was the science fiction story *Dallos*, released on December 21, 1983. Other popular OAVs released during the next two years include the angst-ridden wartime drama *Area 88* on February 5, 1985, followed by Kaname's Productions' bubbly fantasy, *Leda, The Fantastic Adventures of Yoko*, on March 1, 1985.

Four days later "Vanity City," changed from a television series to an 80-minute OAV, was released. The title was once again changed, this time to "Omega Zone 23"; "23" representing the twenty-three wards, or zones, of Tokyo.

Problems with copyrighting the "Omega Zone" name caused the now-OAV to be changed for the last time to "Megazone 23." This time, the name would stick.

Megazone 23 was released as one of the most prominent of the early OAVs on March 5, 1985. To date, three sequels have been produced: *Part II*, "Tell Me A Secret," released on May 30, 1986; *Part III*, *Volume One*, "Eve's Awakening," released on December 16, 1989; and *Part III*, *Volume Two*, "Emancipation Day," released on September 28, 1989.

Some credit *Megazone*'s incredible success to Mikimoto, whose character designs for the idol singer Eve Tokimatsuri were so popular they created a phenomena all their own. Mikimoto credits another of his female icons, Lynn Minmei, as inspiration.



"In the first planning stages of *Megazone*, I wasn't involved because I was working on the *Macross* movie," he says. "Most of the planning was done between Ishiguro, Itano, and Hirano. I knew that they were working on something but I wasn't aware of the specifics." Although it has been widely assumed that *Megazone 23* is a sort-of sequel to *Macross*, despite certain similarities in plot and design that might be regarded as suspicious, there is no evidence to support this assumption.

"After *Macross*, I just sort of fell into the project," Mikimoto says. "Since *Macross* had just finished, and I had drawn a singer-character called Lynn Minmei, Ishiguro, Itano and Hirano asked if I would design another singer for them. It may sound as though I was involved only in the basic designs but actually, during *Megazone 23, Part I*, I was more like an art director."

Mikimoto completely designed Eve for *Part I*, but was not overly involved in either of the two sequels, creating only the initial rough designs. Hirano created all other *Part I* character designs.

"I've been credited as Eve's character designer, but really Kitazume cleaned up my designs [in *Part III*], so I was more like a rough designer . . . from my standpoint, that's just fine. I think it's best that the art director be the one to draw the characters."

In *Part II*, Yasuomi Umetsu (*Robot Carnival*, *Angel Cop*) designed each character except, of course, Eve.

"Since *Part II*'s character designs differed so greatly from *Part I*'s, and the feeling was so different, I really worried how it would turn out."

Asked why Eve's character designs are especially different in *Part III*, Mikimoto replies, "She's different because in this one she's real."

"Thinking back to [the first two parts]," Mikimoto says, "if Eve had been designed by Hirano or Umetsu, she might have turned out better."

Naah.

Megazone 23 is one of those features that seems to appeal to everyone. Science fiction fans are intrigued by the premise, mecha fans marvel at the transforming Garland motorcycle, and Mikimoto fans have another endearing idol singer to appreciate. *Megazone 23* has been successful not only as an OAV, but as a story in its own right.

"What would have happened to the Japanese animation business," *B-Club* asked in a recent *Megazone 23 Special*, "if this show had gone on TV instead of being released as an OAV?"

Perhaps that's a question best unanswered.

—Trish Ledoux

Synopsis

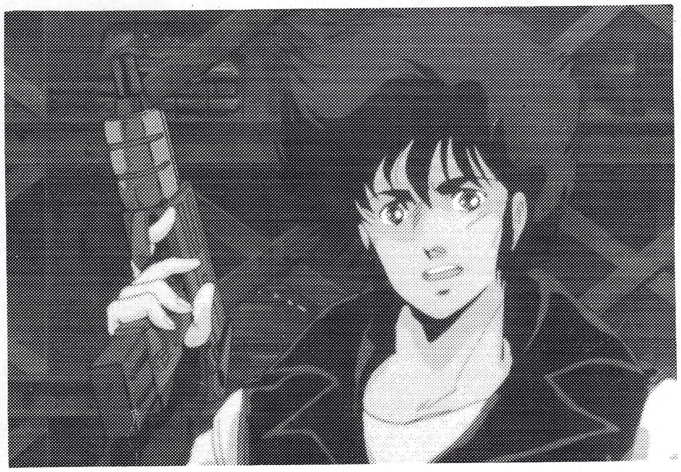
Speeding down a crowded Tokyo street on his motorcycle, Shogo evades a traffic cop and stops short of a collision with a stunned young woman. Shogo offers her a lift to her destination and is pleased when she gives him her name and phone number.

Returning home after an evening with his friend Mory and their "girlfriends" Mai and Tomomi, Shogo finds his friend Shinji waiting for him. Shinji shows him an experimental motorcycle and says that Shogo is to be its test rider. The two flee when agents from Shinji's company arrive to ask Shinji to come quietly. Shogo flees on the experimental motorcycle, labelled "Bahamoud," assuming that Shinji has been killed. The next morning Shogo discovers that not only is there no report of Shinji's death, Shinji has reportedly been "studying in America" for the past three months.

Shogo deduces that the experimental Garland motorcycle and the agents sent to retrieve it must be part of a secret government operation. In an attempt to expose the cover-up of Shinji's death, Shogo decides to go public on Eve Tokimatsuri's popular television program, "Only You."

Unknown to Shogo, the moment the word "Bahamoud" is spoken the line is abruptly severed. Oblivious, Shogo continues to chat with Eve about the events of the previous night as government agents trace the call and race to his location.

Just in time, Shogo senses the trap and wreaks havoc in the ensuing chase across the city's highways. Finally, his pursuers unleash an unusual weapon: "Robots?" Shogo cries. The motorcycle, hearing a command, suddenly transforms and pitches both itself and Shogo off the freeway and into safety.

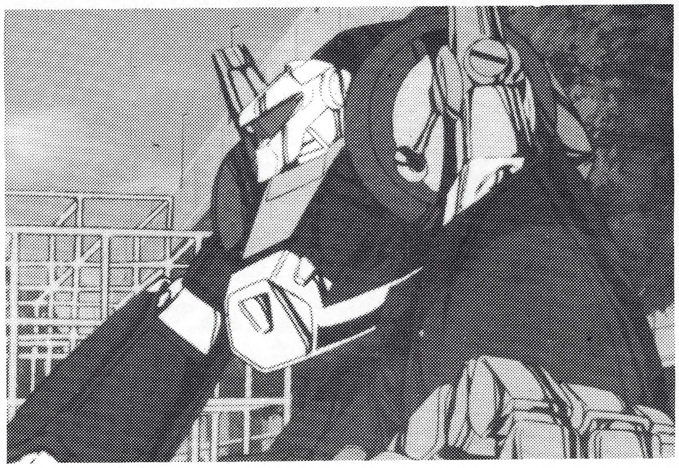


Later, Shogo hides the freshly repainted Garland in the garage of the young woman he almost ran over earlier, Yui, and discusses the situation with her. Shogo is uplifted by Yui's thoughts on life but disillusioned when she abandons him that night for a television director who might give her a part in his new production. Shogo trails the pair and intervenes, much to Yui's annoyance.

Yui's roommate Tomomi decides to cast Yui, Shogo and the Garland in the starring roles of her movie. While scouting locations, Shogo and Tomomi elude a traffic cop by darting under a bridge into a blockaded area. A secret elevator drops them into an enormous underground cavern in which, strangely, normal gravity is maintained. The temperature is freezing cold, and there is a model of a complete city on the ceiling.

Shogo leaves Tomomi behind to gleefully shoot her footage, and takes an elevator to the "city on the ceiling" after hearing some voices on the motorcycle's scanner. It seems as though the word "Bahamoud" refers to some kind of computer in the complex.

Shogo is attacked by hovercrafts from which he flees after a brief battle, and abruptly finds himself in outer space after crashing through the model's wall. He is then attacked by a robot and after eventually gaining the upper hand, decides to rescue it in order to get some answers.



The rescued attacker is B.D., a commander of the secret armed forces. B.D. tells Shogo that while the military has always known that the city is encapsulated within a giant spaceship, it is the controlling Bahamoud computer that has kept the secret from the populace. His "world" of Tokyo, Shogo discovers, is only an illusion maintained by the computer.

B.D. shows Shogo the military's underground base and tells him that an unknown enemy is rapidly approaching their ship. Since Bahamoud will not allow the creation of weapons, the military has been developing defenses in areas outside of Bahamoud's surveillance. In addition, the military is slowly dismantling the computer.

The commander tells him that although Bahamoud has been stripped down to its sixth layer of control, the secret Garland motorcycle was not to have been revealed until the seventh and final layer was gone. Shogo, thinking that this is just an excuse for the military to establish a totalitarian government, storms away.

Back in the city, Mai has won a place in the chorus of Eve's new songs, and is crushed when the performance goes on without Eve's presence. Shogo, remembering B.D.'s words, decides to sneak into the television studio to see what is really going on. Shocked and angry, he discovers that Eve is only a computer graphic designed and controlled by Bahamoud.

While B.D.'s men continue to chip away at Bahamoud's seventh layer, Shogo suddenly receives a desperate transmission from Eve on the Garland's scanner. Eve tells him that 500 years ago, Earth was rendered uninhabitable and spaceships were launched to search for another homeland. Eve, Bahamoud's seventh layer, was created to protect the spaceship's inhabitants. Just before the screen goes blank she cries, "Help me! I am about to be terminated!"

The military eventually succeeds in breaching Bahamoud's last layer and begins to distribute fake news footage to shift public opinion toward war. While a confused Shogo finds solace in Yui's arms, B.D. executes a coup d'état and mobilizes the army and space forces. The populace is roused, volunteers are called, and the war begins. But their forces are weak compared to the enemy and are quickly destroyed.

Meanwhile, in order to eliminate any evidence of the underground cavern, B.D. sends agents to kill Tomomi and recover her footage of the area. Shogo, Yui and Mai discover the body. Mai dissolves into hysteria and an enraged Shogo opts for vengeance.

In the stolen Garland, Shogo finds B.D. and challenges him to a battle. Despite his best efforts, Shogo's youth is no match for B.D.'s expertise. B.D., perhaps remembering their first battle, refrains from killing Shogo and kicks him onto an elevator that will return him to the streets of Tokyo.

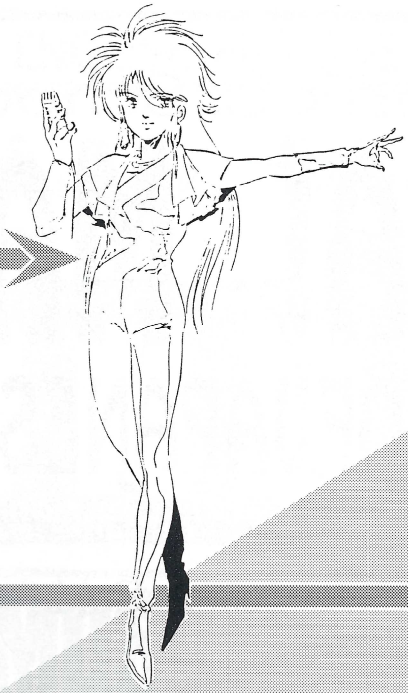
As Yui watches a tearful Mai pack and leave their apartment, she remembers what she had said to Shogo earlier.

"This is the happiest time of all."

Unknown to Yui, Shogo lies unconscious in the Garland, painfully awakening to Eve's "Lullaby of the Wind." His battles over, at least for the time being, Shogo limps into the city, determined to fight another day. ■

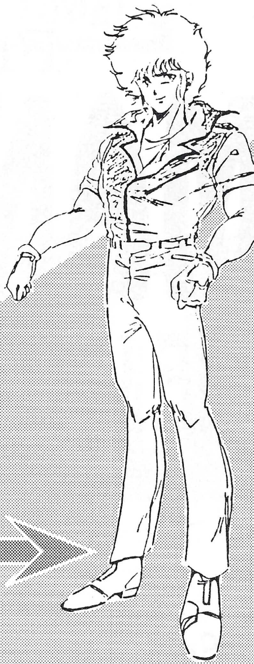
Eve Tokimatsuri

Idolized popular singer who hosts her own variety show. Strangely, no one has ever seen her in person . . . .



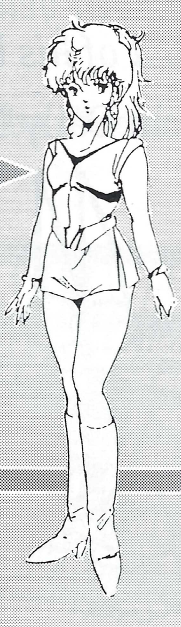
Shogo Yahagi

Rebellious young man with a street-wise innocence and integrity who fights to protect his honor and to avenge his friends. When Shogo discovers a sinister secret about the world he lives in, he must decide whether he will reveal it or help others to keep it.



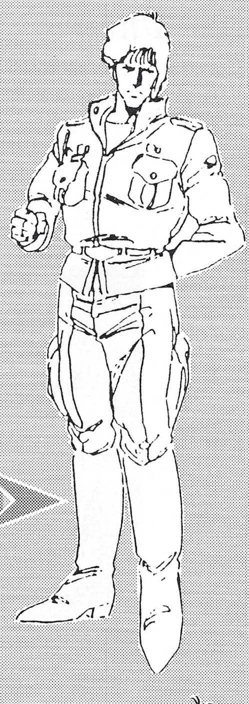
Yui Takanaka

Aspiring dancer working at the Hard Rock Cafe in Roppongi, Japan, whose dream is to perform on Broadway. Yui's romance with Shogo is a soft spot in her otherwise worldly persona.



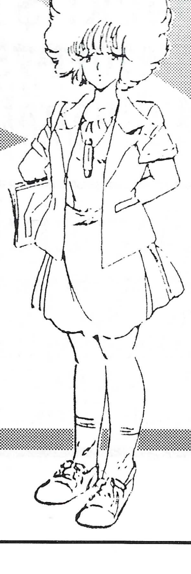
B.D.

An officer of the military with no qualms over using violence to achieve his own ends. However, B.D. has his own sense of honor and justice.



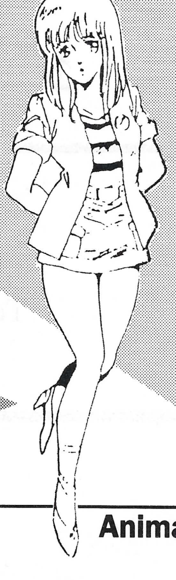
Tomomi Murashita

Red-haired and impetuous part-time writer who seems to think solely in terms of camera angles. Tomomi's amateur production featuring Shogo and his stolen motorcycle causes unexpected—and tragic—results.



Mai Yumekano

Innocent and gentle, the young singer Mai has lived mostly a sheltered life and now rooms with Tomomi and Yui, wanting nothing more than to perform with her idol, Eve Tokimatsuri. Mai also works at the Hard Rock Cafe.



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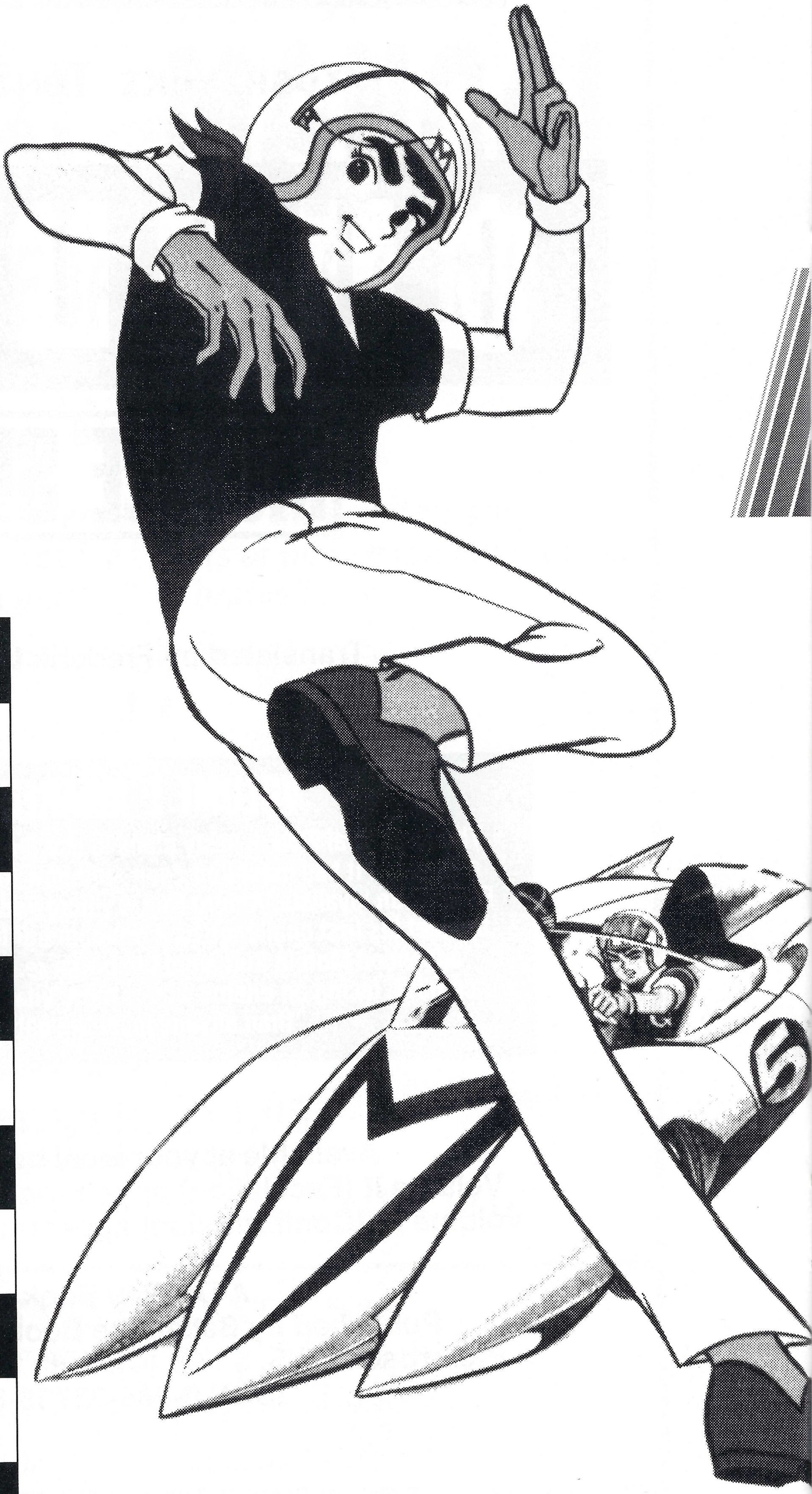
ANIME FLASHBACK

The Show that Established Japanese Animation in America



Speed Racer

By Ann Schubert

***Speed Racer* hit American television screens in 1967, and if nostalgia can be considered a measure of success, *Speed Racer* is one of the most successful cartoons ever shown in the United States. What most fans at that time never knew, however, was that *Speed Racer* was not originally intended for the American audience that remembers it so fondly. The show was actually first conceived in Japan almost ten years before its American debut.**

The show known in the U.S. as *Speed Racer* had its start in the early sixties as the popular manga series *Mach Go Go Go*. Conceived and illustrated by Tatsuo Yoshida, the comic centered around the innovative Mach Go racing car and its driver, an intrepid youth named Go Mifune. When the comic proved a success, Yoshida's family-owned Tatsunoko Studios (*Gatchaman*, *Macross*) took over the job of animating the story into 52 half-hour episodes.

Tatsunoko, founded by Yoshida and his brothers Kenji Yoshida and Ippei Kuri, had previously released a black-and-white series called *Space Ace*. The *Mach Go Go Go* show was their first attempt to create a "serious" color program, and established the Tatsunoko "look" appearing in later series such as *Judo Boy*, *Casshan*, *Hurricane Polimar*, *Gordian*, and *Tekkaman*. The male lead of *Mach Go Go Go*, Go Mifune, was designed to be a man with a strict moral code sometimes conflicting with his goal of winning races. His unusual family life, with a race-car building father, estranged and mysterious elder brother, and mischievous chimp-loving younger brother, contributed to the successful two-season run of the show in Japan.

Trans-Lux Productions bought the rights to *Mach Go Go Go* in 1967 and changed the title to *Speed Racer*. Go Mifune became "Speed Racer," and the Mach Go car became the "Mach 5." The show was modified for an English audience in accord with Tatsunoko's strict guideline that the background music be kept intact. Translations of the Japanese dialogue were provided by Tatsunoko, and were rewritten to keep *Speed Racer* as close as possible to *Mach Go Go Go*.

Very little was edited from the original show. Most of Trans-Lux Productions' changes involved character names, and the locations of the races and the Racer/Mifune home. However, cultural differences resulted in one important change in the American version: the focus of the story was shifted from the car to the driver. Speed Racer became more important as a character, even having his name as the title, as compared to the Japanese version where the car is the title character.

Speed Racer was not the first Japanese animated show to be imported onto American television—Osamu Tezuka's *Kimba the White Lion* and *Astro Boy* were the first—but it certainly ranks among the most popular with American fans. Its popularity, both now and then, might lead some to wonder why it hasn't been rereleased. One reason might be that *Speed Racer* is simply too violent by current American television standards, and deals with issues too mature or too disturbing for parental comfort.

One episode, "The Car Hater," is a good example of the sort of material a typical *Speed Racer* episode contained. "The Car Hater" deals with a man who, since his son died as the result of a car accident, hires a group of thugs to sabotage car brakes in an effort to prove how dangerous automobiles really are. In one scene, he beats his daughter with a horsewhip for admiring the Mach 5 and for wanting to be a race car driver. Ultimately, he causes an accident that nearly costs him his daughter's life. Although he repents in the end and vows to make up for the damage he has done, the themes in the episode are unacceptable according to current broadcasting standards.

The situations presented in *Speed Racer* are also considered too complex. For example, a running story line concerns Speed Racer's brother, Rex Racer, who has broken with the family and, becoming a spy, calls himself "Racer X." Current thought maintains that the cartoon-watching audience, namely children between the ages of four and twelve, is unable to understand a continuing subplot of this nature. Yet another factor is the number of episodes: *Speed Racer* contains only 52, well below the number required for weekly syndication.

Happily for the determined fan, however, *Speed Racer* episodes are now available on videotape. Additionally, Now Comics is printing up new self-titled adventures for both Speed Racer and his brother, Racer X. For those who enjoyed the episodes as a kid, or even those who simply appreciate *Speed Racer* for the milestone it is, there still exists a way to enjoy the adventures of Speed Racer, that demon on wheels. ■

Mach 5 Gadgets

Auto Jack Four jacks spring out to enable obstacle jumps

Belt Tire Special belt that wraps around tire to improve traction

Choppers (Cutter) Two buzz saws emerge from front of car to cut down trees and other obstacles

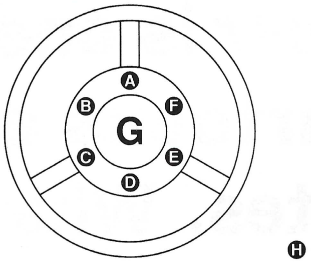
Defenser Activates overhead canopy; shield against rain, dust or other substances

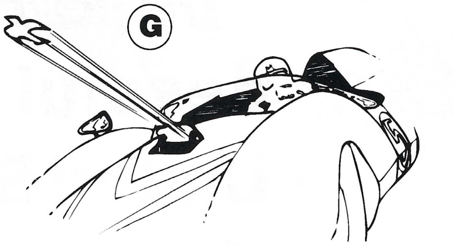
Evening Eye Causes headlights to emit infrared light; when used with driver's goggles on the helmet, allows night driving

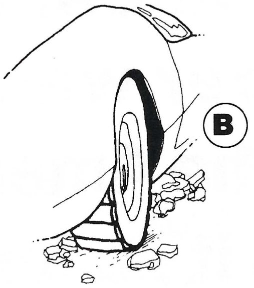
Frogger Similar to "D" button; seals canopy and activates oxygen supply to allow underwater travel

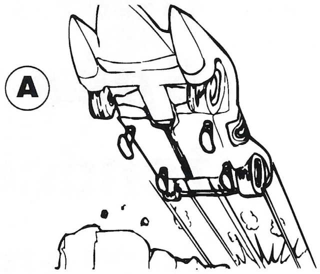
Gizmo Rocket Launches miniature bird-shaped communicator rocket from hood; can be remotely controlled

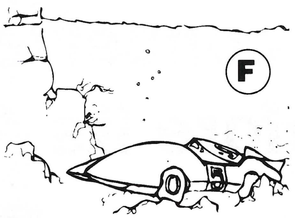
Homing Unit Located next to seat; homes gizmo rocket to predetermined location

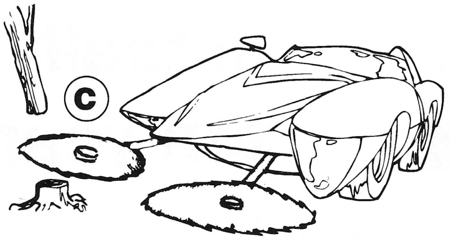






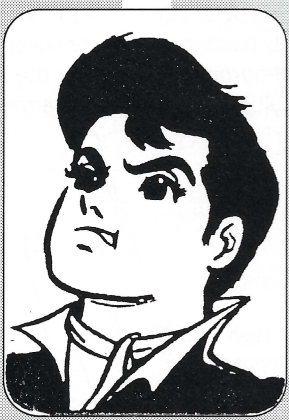


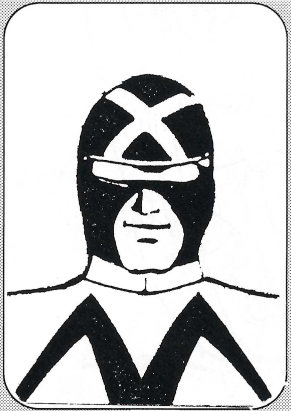




The Racer Crew

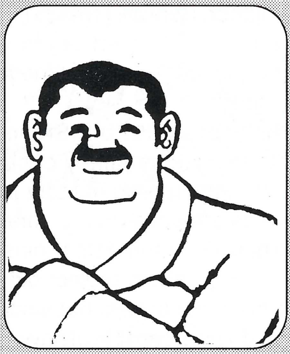
Speed Racer
Handsome, heroic, dashing and daring, this 18-year-old is the never-say-die driver of the Mach 5, the most amazing car ever built! Call him Speed . . . he's a demon on wheels. Just ask Trixie!



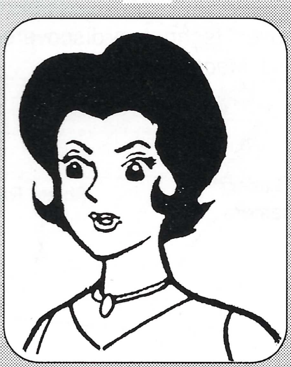


Racer X
The man of mystery, a shrouded figure of despair . . . who knows his guilty secret? We do! He's really Speed Racer's older brother Rex, now working undercover for Interpol in Paris as a spy! But mum's the word—no matter how much he wants to come home, his arguments with Pops keep him away!

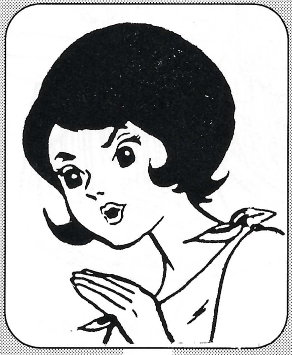
Pops Racer
Brawn and brains in one pudgy package! Builder of the Mach 5, this aging charmer was once a wrestler, a race-car driver and is currently the father of three sexy sons—Rex, Speed and Spridle. Yowza!

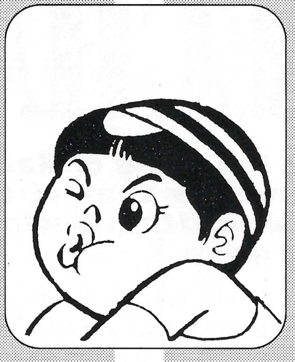


Speed's Mother
Home is where the heart is, and that's where you can find this fount of domestic comfort and love. Bring her white roses, boys—they're her favorite!



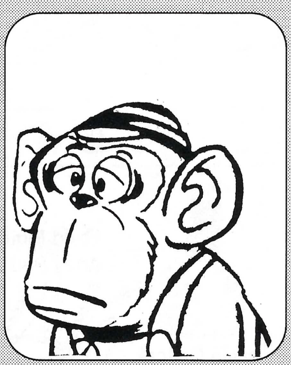
Trixie
Not only can this spunky gal pilot a helicopter and deliver a mean punch, she's also a member of the Mach 5 Go Team and Speed's lady love. Wow! How lucky can an 18-year-old get?

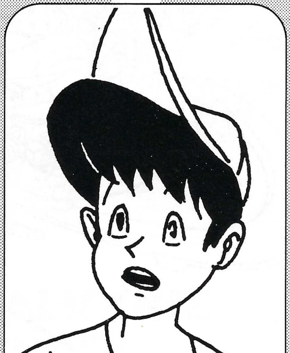




Spridle
This on-the-go seven-year-old manages to help and hamper Speed at every turn. Seeing the way looks run in the family, all we have to say is, "Thank heaven for little boys . . . . "

Chim-Chim
Every family needs a pet, and Chim-Chim is the dream mascot for the Mach 5 Go Team! He's always willing to lend a hand—or should we say, a monkey wrench?





Sparky
Nimble fingers are never at a loss for the Mach 5 Go Team's mechanic and Pop's chief assistant. He assists Pops on the car and Speed with his adventures. What a guy!

By James Teal

MECHA FILE

A Continuing Series on the Mechanics and Robots of Japanese Animation

From the world of Macross, the mecha that virtually established the transforming robot genre

The VF-series (variable fighter) from *Superdimensional Fortress Macross* has had a substantial effect on the mechanical designs in the world of Japanese animation as well as on the international toy market.

Macross' Valkyrie revitalized a trend in giant robot shows, showcasing transforming robots almost everywhere. One factor that contributes to the Valkyrie's continuing popularity is its form, similar enough to a conventional fighter to make the idea seem almost realistic. Another factor is the Valkyrie's three modes of transformation, as compared to the two modes found in other transforming model toys.

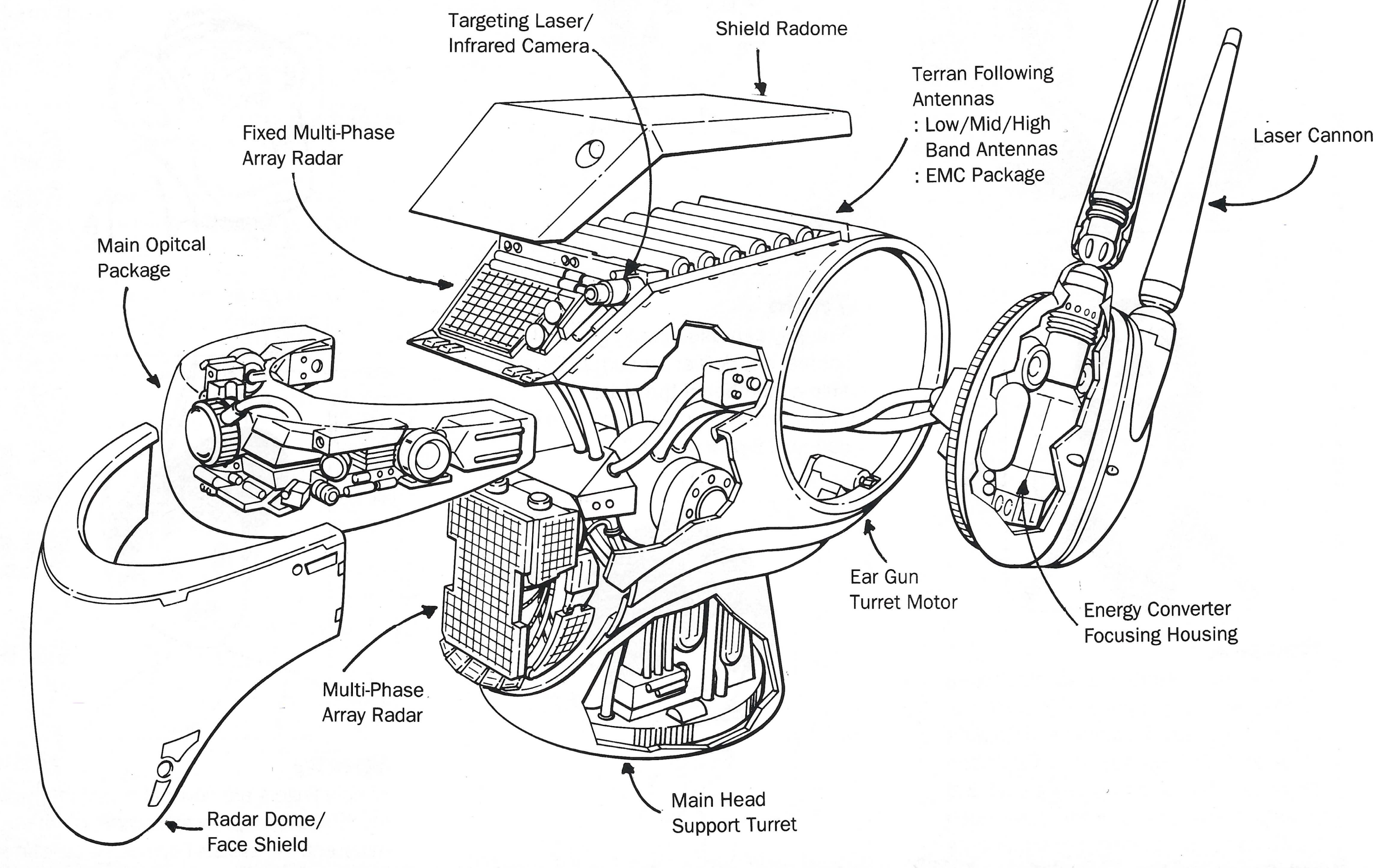
The VF-series Valkyrie is designed to be a highly maneuverable multi-role ground, air, and space combat unit, capable of three flight modes: Fighter, Gerwalk [*g(round)-e(ffective) r(einforcement) of w(inged) a(rmament) with l(ocomotive) k(nee) joint*], and the humanoid Battroid mode.

In the year 2001, the Stonewell and Belcom corporations jointly designed the Battroid for widespread military use. This program was effectively put on hiatus when the more heavily armored Destroids were developed. The Destroid project did wonders for the army and marines, but since none of the Destroids were capable of navy or air force use, the Valkyrie continued to be researched and designed.

In the year 2005, the Centinental corporation joined the project to assist Stonewell and Belcom with the conversion from Battroid to fighter and back. This transformation was made possible by the so-called "over" technology discovered aboard the SDF-1 *Macross*.

The Valkyrie's third transformation mode, the Gerwalk, is halfway between Fighter and Battroid. This mode was initially discovered during a test-flight accident. The Gerwalk form gives the Valkyrie greater maneuverability than the Fighter and greater speed than the Battroid. Hovering in Gerwalk mode is a much more stable form of ground transportation than walking around in Battroid. A Valkyrie can achieve vertical take-off and landing in this mode, as well as hover for a full seven minutes.

Despite all these advantages, there are a few problems with utilizing a variable geometry unit such as the Valkyrie. For example, the production and maintenance costs for a Valkyrie are twenty times that of a Destroid. The general complexity of the unit also makes it very difficult to pilot. Due to the Valkyrie's versatility it balances out cost overruns with its multi-purpose usage and the ability to serve multiple branches of the armed forces.



Targeting Laser/ Infrared Camera
Shield Radome
Terran Following Antennas
: Low/Mid/High Band Antennas
: EMC Package
Laser Cannon
Fixed Multi-Phase Array Radar
Main Opitcal Package
Ear Gun Turret Motor
Energy Converter Focusing Housing
Multi-Phase Array Radar
Main Head Support Turret
Radar Dome/ Face Shield

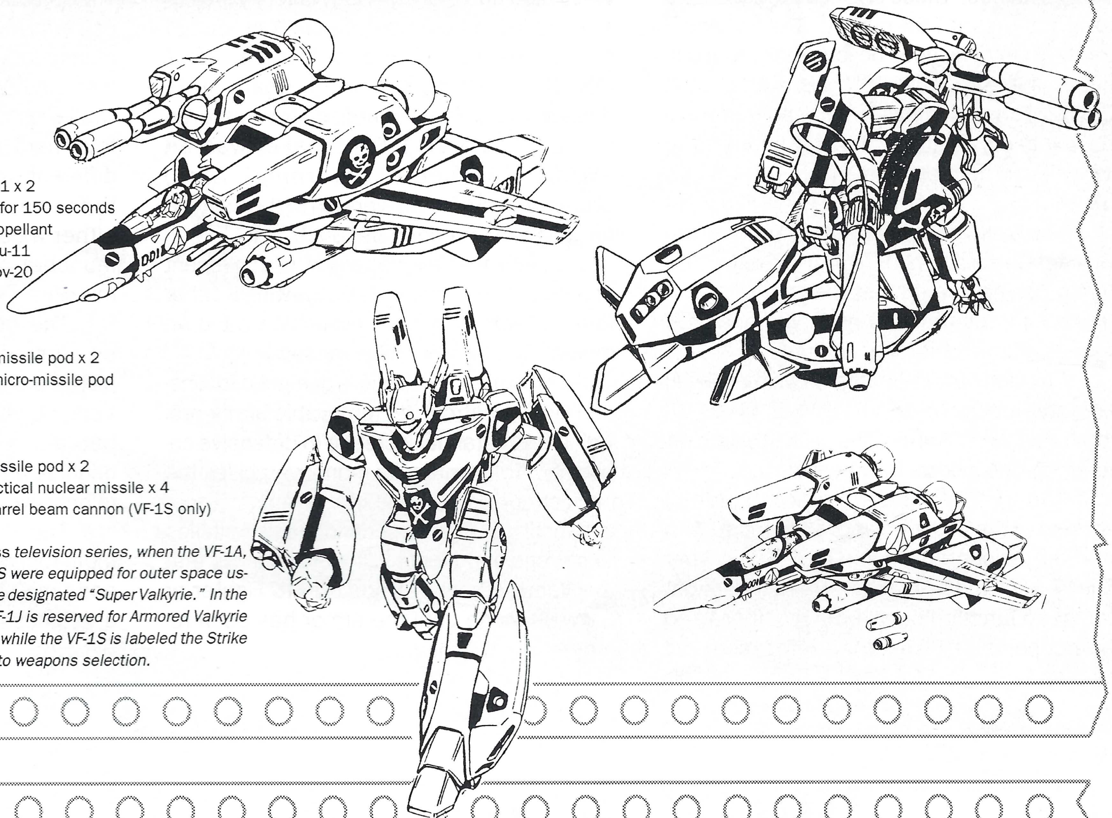
VF-1A and VF-1J SUPER VALKYRIE/VF-1S STRIKE VALKYRIE

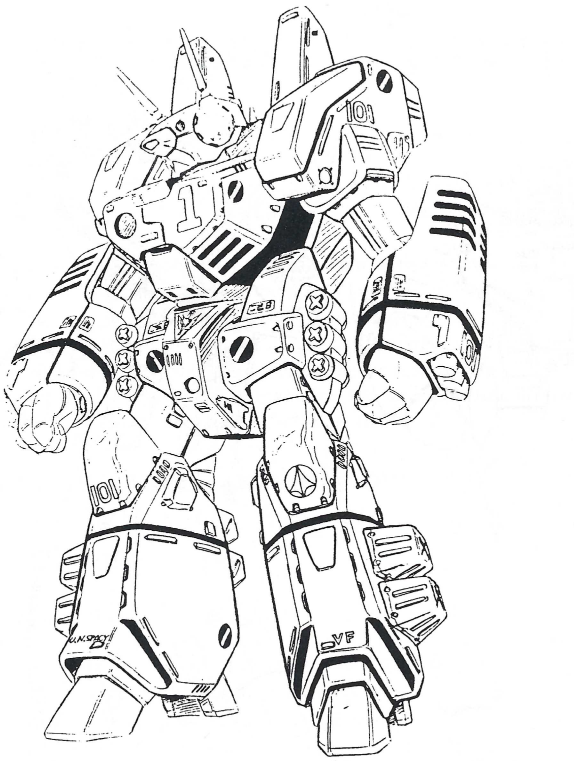
Height (Fighter)	5.50 m
Body Weight	19.20 t
Normal Take-Off Weight	45.00 t
Maximum Take-Off Weight	72.00 t

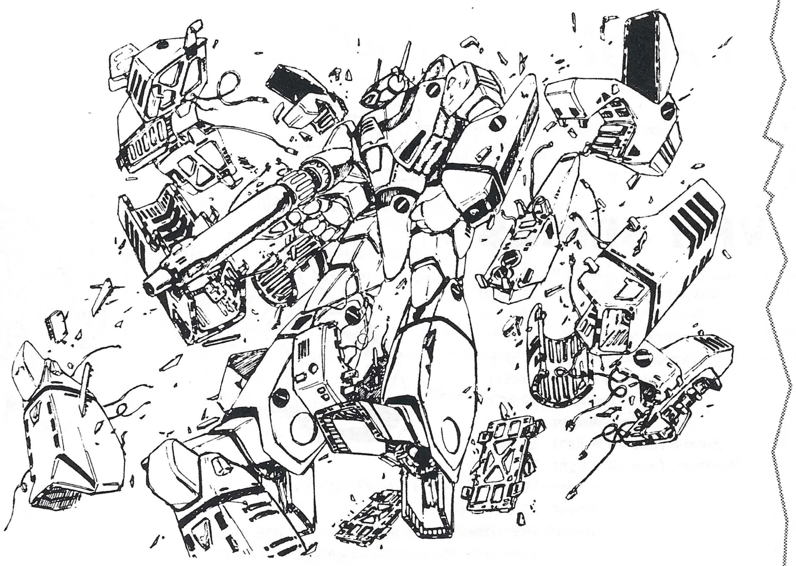
ADDED EQUIPMENT

Booster Engine	P & H EF-2001 x 2
Thrust	120.00 t x 2 for 150 seconds
Fast Pack	11.00 t of propellant
Armaments	• Howard Gu-11 • Mauler Rov-20 VF-1A x 1 VF-1J x 2 VF-1S x 4 • Forearm missile pod x 2 • Booster micro-missile pod VF-1A x 2 VF-1J x 2 VF-1S x 1 • UUM-7 missile pod x 2 • RMS-1 tactical nuclear missile x 4 • Double-barrel beam cannon (VF-1S only)

In the Macross *television series, when the VF-1A, VF-1J or VF-1S were equipped for outer space usage, they were designated "Super Valkyrie." In the movie, the VF-1J is reserved for Armored Valkyrie conversions, while the VF-1S is labeled the Strike Valkyrie due to weapons selection.*







ARMORED VALKYRIE

Shinnakasu GBP-1S (grenade box protector)

Equipment Mass	16.2 t
Combined Mass	34.7 t
Armament	• Elicon GH-32 grenade crusher x 56 • Elicon GA-100 high-velocity armor-piercing crusher x 6 • Remington H-22 high-power hand grenade x 6

Weaponry

The VF-series Valkyrie has two Shinnakasu-built P & H Royce FF 2001 thermonuclear reactive turbines. These engines produce 11.5 tons of thrust at 75% output. The Valkyrie's throttle controller goes beyond maximum output to afterburner at 120% and overboost at 200%. These engines are capable of functioning in either atmosphere or space. The Valkyrie can normally fly at mach 3.3 (4.5 with boost).

The Valkyrie's primary weapon is the Howard Gu-11 gun pod. This triple-barrel, 55 mm machine gun fires at the rate of 1,200 rounds per minute, and can carry only 200 rounds of ammunition at one time.

Six different models of the Valkyrie have been produced to date: VF-1A, VF-1D, VF-1J, VF-1S, VT-1, and the VE-1. Perhaps the easiest way to differentiate the models is by head design.

The VF-1A is the standard "soldier" version of the Valkyrie, and is equipped with one head-mounted Mauler Rov-20 laser gun. The VF-1D is the two-seater "trainer" version, the head functioning as both a camera and an independently targeting gun for each pilot (this unit is replaced by the VT-1 in the film, *Macross—Do You Remember Love?*). The VF-1J also has two Rov-20s, and is a single-seater. The VF-1S was originally produced as the "Roy Fokker Special," and has four Rov-20 lasers built into the head. This design was later standardized for squadron leaders. The VE-1 Elintseeker was an AWACS [*A(irborne) W(arning) A(nd) C(ommand) S(ystem)*] version of the Valkyrie for long-range reconnaissance.

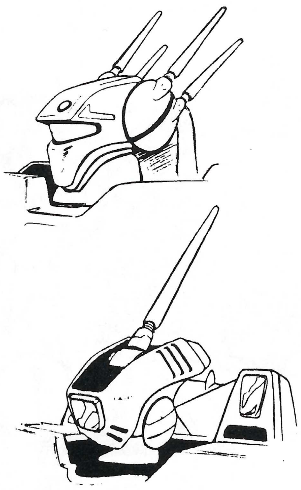
Initially, the Valkyrie carried a complement of twelve air-to-air missiles on the wings. Other forms of weaponry were available via the Armored, Super, and Strike variations.

The Armored Valkyrie is designed to function like a Destroid, its removable armor providing a substantial increase in defensive capability. To maintain its maneuverability, the back armor also includes extra thrust. Armor is supplied with an arsenal of micro-missiles to barrage opponents. One drawback is that the Valkyrie cannot transform to Fighter or Gerwalk mode until the armor has been removed or jettisoned.

The Super Valkyrie and Strike Valkyrie attachments are designed for space use. These accessories include two extremely powerful rocket boosters, several clusters of maneuvering thrusters, and a heavy complement of missiles. In place of the standard twelve missiles mounted on the wings, the four "hard points" (a mount location in which different weaponry can be stored according to the needs of the specific mission) hold either a combination of 15-count missile launcher pods or paired tactical nuclear missiles.

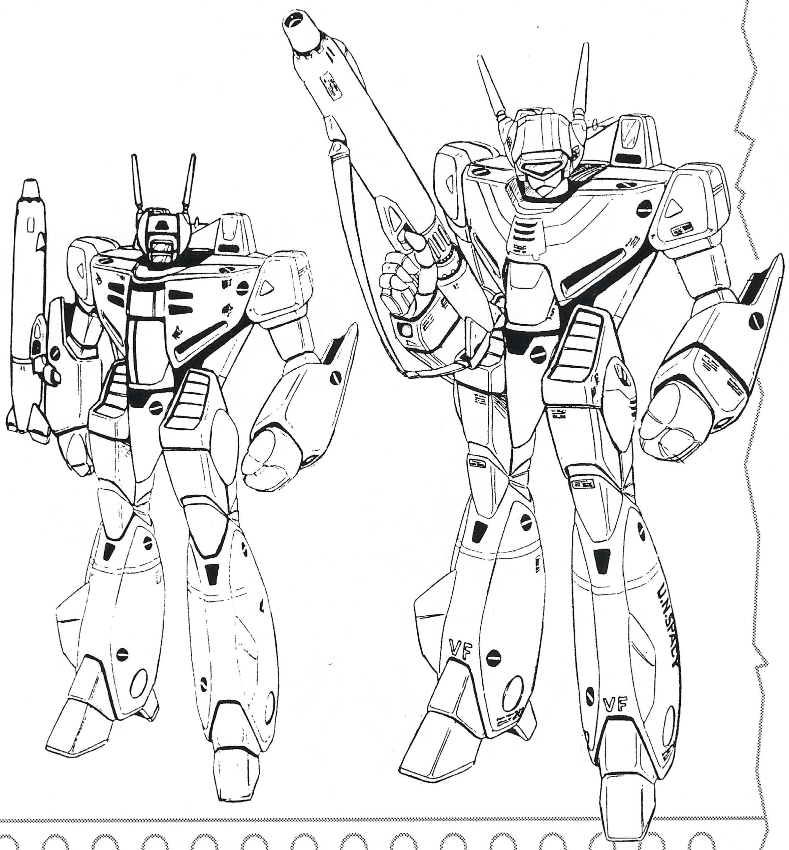
The top of the booster rockets also hold an array of micro-missiles. The difference between the Strike Valkyrie and Super Valkyrie is that the Strike Valkyrie's right booster replaces the missile pod with a double-barrel beam cannon (the Strike option is only available for the VF-1S).

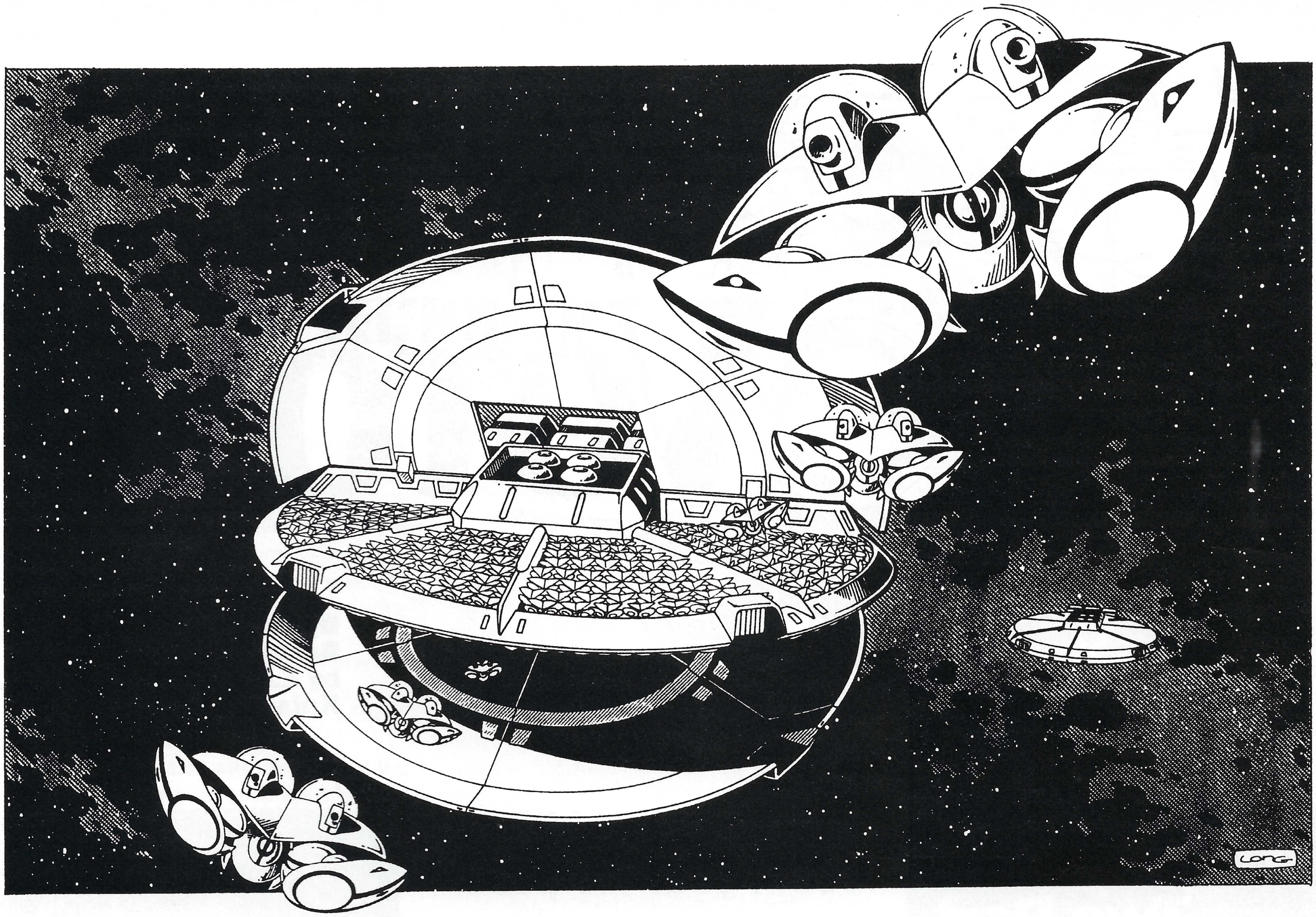
The Valkyrie serves its purpose as a multi-role combat unit on the battlefield time and time again, proving the practicality and usefulness of a variable geometry combat vehicle. ■



VF-1 SERIES

Length	14.23 m
Unswept Wingspan 20°	14.78 m
Swept Wingspan 42°	12.12 m
Overswept Wingspan 72°	8.75 m
Wingspan in Hangar	4.70 m
Height (Fighter)	2.85 m
Height (Battroid)	12.68 m
Body Weight	13.25 t
Normal Take-Off Weight	18.50 t
Maximum Take-Off Weight	37.00 t
Engine	Shinnakasu P & H Royce FF-2001 x 2
Thrust	11.5 t x 2 at 75% power
Armor	With cockpit blast shield in place and wings overswept, the Valkyrie can withstand re-entry heat while inverted
Armaments	• Howard Gu-11 55 mm, 3-barrel gatling gun pod; 1200 rpm/200 rounds • Mauler Rov-20 anti-aircraft laser: VF-1A x 1 VF-1D x 2 VF-1J x 2 VF-1S x 4 • (4) hard points for various missile load • (12) air-to-air missiles (standard)





Robotech™: The New Generation

Available on video tape from Palladium Books®

At last, you can see the incredible REF Cyclone, Alpha, and Beta Fighters in dynamic action against the insidious Invid!

This is the *first* time the **Robotech**™**: The New Generation** (a.k.a. Mospeada or Invid Invasion) has been made available on VHS video tape in North America.

The *New Generation* portion of the **Robotech**™ television series is second only to *Macross* in popularity. Yet most fans have never seen it.

Why? Well, it simply seemed to get less TV air time than the famous *Macross* segments. Many syndicated stations opted to repeat the popular *Macross* episodes rather than the entire series, never realizing how many fans longed to see the *New Generation*. Likewise, the *New Generation/Invids* has never been available on video tape. Until now that is.

Palladium Books® proudly presents ROBOTECH™: The New Generation on VHS video tape.

The *past* unavailability of the *New Generation* (Invid) was a tragedy, because it offers spectacular, dynamic and colorful animation, as well as great combat scenes, a swift moving story, and the famous REF mecha, including the Cyclones, Alphas, Betas, and Shadow Fighters.

The story is a gripping one of survival and courage, as a half dozen young freedom fighters battle their way across the American continent, fighting against staggering odds. Ultimately, their valiant efforts rekindle humankind's spirit and ends in the climactic battle at *Reflex Point* (and it is a climax that's as exciting as one can get).

The first New Generation/Invids video tape presents the first three episodes, *The Invid Invasion, The Lost City,* and *Lonely Soldier Boy*. Witness the swift and terrible invasion of the Invid, the arrival of *Scott Bernard* and the destruction of the second REF assault fleet. Scott immediately meets the wilderness scout, *Rand,* and the two embark on adventure. By the end of the third episode, our cast of heroes is complete, *Scott Bernard, Rand, Rook, Lunk, Annie,* and the infamous *Lancer (a.k.a. Yellow Dancer)*.

Robotech™ fans take note!

- **All 25 episodes will be presented in their original, televised form. Uncut and unedited!**
- **There will be eight tapes in the video tape series. Three complete episodes will be presented on each tape (only number seven will contain four episodes).**
- **Running time approximately 76 minutes.**
- **Sorry, VHS Only!**
- **Glorious Color!**
- **Unrated. Does contain violence (it is a war story).**
- **Suggested retail price is $29.95.**
- **Available in hobby stores and comic book shops everywhere. Or directly from Palladium Books® by mail at $24.95 plus $5.00 for first class postage and protective bubble envelope and handling.**
- **The first Robotech™: New Generation video tape should be in the stores mid October. Features an original cover by artist Kevin Long.**
- **The second tape will be available in December. A new tape will be released approximately every two or three months thereafter.**

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Palladium Books®, your Robotech™ connection!

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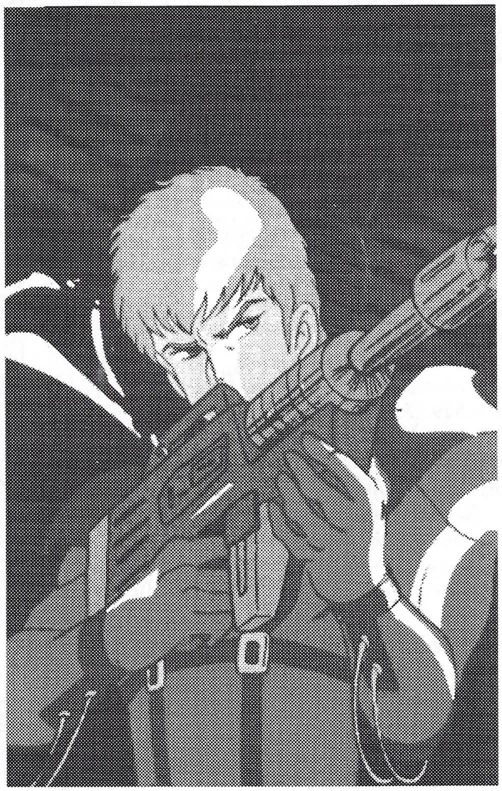
ARMORED TROOPER VOTOMS

By Tim Eldred
Based on Translations by E.H. Migaki and Katsuyuki Suzuki

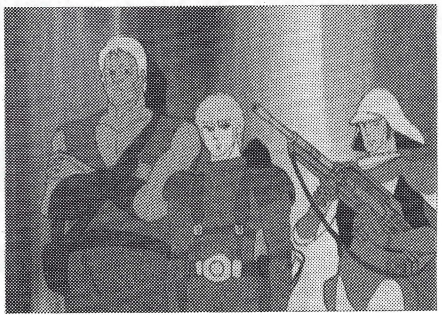
First of a Two-Part Article

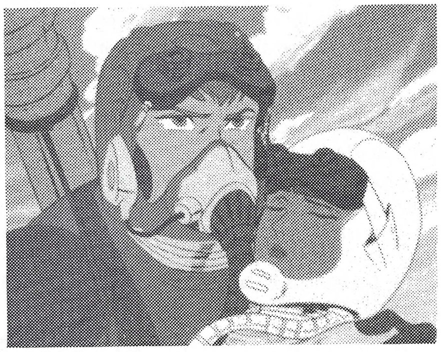


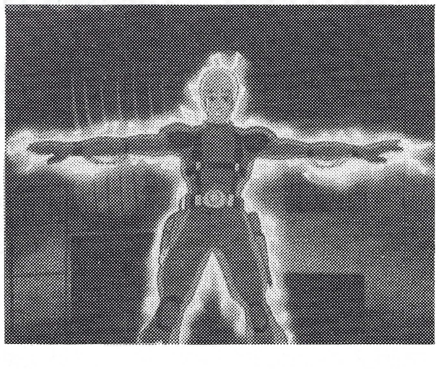
It was early 1983, a boom year for post-*Gundam* Japanese animation. Writer/director Ryosuke Takahashi had introduced *Fang of the Sun, Dougram* to audiences eager for more of the exciting new potential that *Mobile Suit Gundam* had inspired by shifting perspective away from the robot superteam shows of the Seventies. Takahashi showed audiences that the animated robot could also work as a tool to further human goals, and *Dougram* was Takahashi's first step into this philosophical territory. He was about to take a bigger one.

"After *Dougram*, I wanted to write a fantasy," Takahashi says. "I wanted a world in which robots were not unnatural, but that was difficult to combine with a fantasy story, and I didn't want to copy *Dunbine* . . . I changed my plans and created *Votoms*."

This new series, released by Nippon Sunrise, was broadcast from April, 1983 to April, 1984. Although ratings were not particularly strong at first, *Votoms*' popularity virtually exploded over the following years as spinoffs emerged on video and in print. Today, some consider *Votoms* to perhaps rival *Mobile Suit Gundam* in both scope and complexity, giving rise to the suspicion that it was indeed a series ahead of its time.







Part of the reason for *Votoms'* later success might be attributed to the meticulous planning that went into the series from the beginning, especially when Takahashi began to stretch the limitations of the television medium.

"In TV there is always the possibility of cancellation," Takahashi says, "so we divided the story into several parts to present variety and left gaps that gave us the opportunity for future stories."

Takahashi started with an intriguing premise: If a soldier knows nothing but war all his life, what happens to him when the war ends and he must rejoin society? At first, Takahashi reasoned, some would seek simulation of war in a battle ring, similar to a wrestling match, and over time and after seeing many people and places, the soldier would become rehabilitated.

The soldier Takahashi had in mind would later become Chirico Cuvie, but many other elements would be developed before his saga could be fully realized.

When Takahashi was envisioning the setting for his story, he was strongly influenced by the 1982 film *Blade Runner.* Co-writer Soji Yoshikawa remembers Takahashi considering the inclusion of a replicant-like being. Things began to fall into place.

"There were discussions at Nippon Sunrise at that time about different ways to operate a robot and whether it was enough for a soldier to have ordinary human ability. Our 'perfect soldier' concept arose from that."

With this new concept as a catalyst, Takahashi began to build Chirico's character upon deeper observations of war in general.

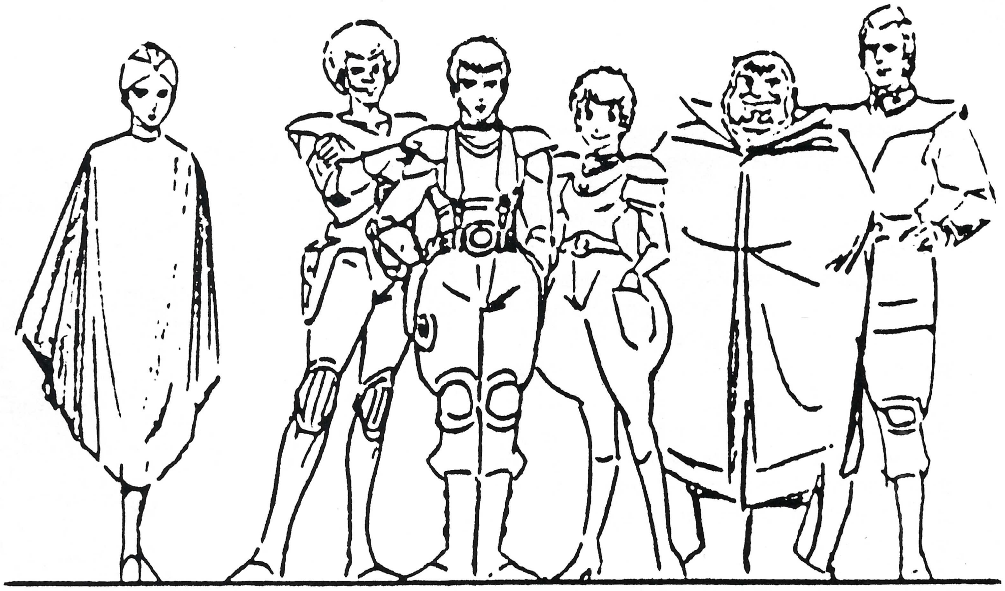
"There will be war," Takahashi says, "as long as there is a tendency in people to either dominate or want to be dominated."

Takahashi explored this peripherally in *Dougram* but, as he admits, the viewpoint was too broad and the characters not strong enough.

"In *Votoms*, the camera is more intimate and concentrated on the hero. I wanted the hero to have a strong personality which would refuse to dominate or be dominated."

Together, Takahashi and Yoshikawa forged ahead with the first part of the story. As they progressed, they found Chirico's character too strong to remain bound to one place and so as locales changed, the focus of the story drew tighter as well. But, incredibly, they still had not thought of an ending. Story writer Toji Gomu recalls how this problem was dealt with.

"Generally, this type of robot anime has an ending figured in when we start. But when Chirico's battles were over, we wondered, how would he fill the void in his heart? Would he have to live without hope? To answer these questions, I think director Takahashi prepared the god-story to help Chirico along."



The "god-story" is said to have been inspired by Arthur C. Clarke's short story, "The Nine Billion Names of God," which involves a gigantic computer of divine proportions. Around this basic premise, Takahashi built the image of the planet Quent, to which Chirico travels in the final segment of the series. Yoshikawa recalls the extensive logic that had to be worked out to maintain the integrity of the story.

"We had to write the history of everything. It was difficult, but if we could make this kind of story, we might even explore the occult although that would normally be impossible for TV."

Consequently, it was decided not to overemphasize either the occult or the "mere human ability" aspect so as not to drift too far into melodrama. But what was created inspired so much intrigue that the follow-ups have been nonstop since 1984. No less than nine video releases (including three original video releases), a series of "side-story" or companion novels called *Blue Knight Berserga*, an OAV "sequel" series, *Armored Hunter Mellowlink*, and numerous books have carried the world of *Votoms* far beyond its original premise.

Takahashi went on to create many other successful animated series including *Round Vernian Vifam*, *Panzer Blade Galient* and *SPT Layzner*, but many still consider *Votoms* to be Takahashi's masterwork. Although it might seem easy to categorize *Votoms* as "serious" robot animation, Takahashi reminds us of its sentimental ending.

"A happy ending is not a probable one in a series like this . . . after all, we wouldn't want to see someone like Chirico raising a family." Conversely, Takahashi says, it wouldn't necessarily be a good thing if the heroine were to meet a tragic end, so the story ends as it does.

Perhaps Takahashi got to write his fantasy after all.

Character Design

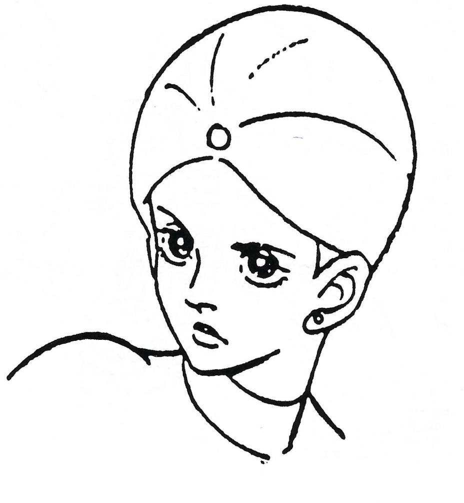
Having worked under veteran character designer Soji Yoshikawa on *Dougram*, Norio Shioyama was permitted to design the *Votoms* characters on his own. From the beginning, Shioyama wanted to design Chirico Cuvie on the basis of the character's disposition.

Echoing Takahashi's philosophy, Shioyama says, "I first imagined Chirico as a boy whose mind was damaged by the war. As he meets various people and experiences various things, the wound heals."

The look of the character softens to reflect this as the story progresses. As the project evolves, the character becomes slightly less severe and more mature-looking, allowing a greater range of expression.

This differentiates Chirico from a supporting character like Vanilla, who does not require an extensive facial vocabulary and thus can look severe in any instance.

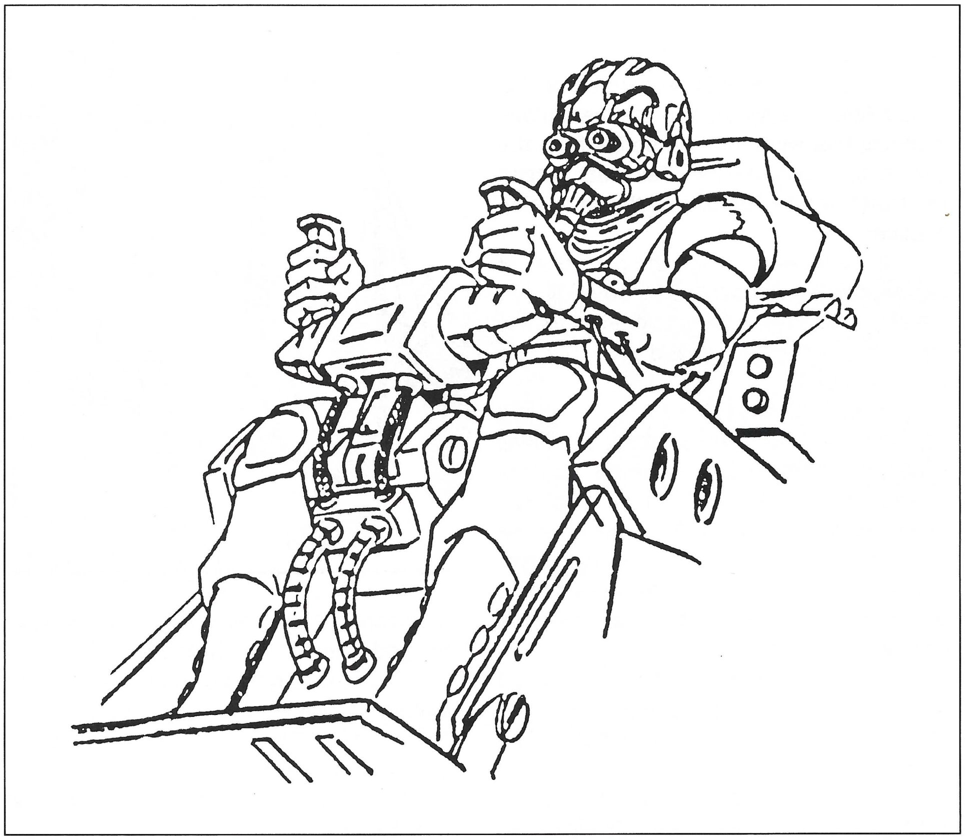
Fyana, on the other hand, requires a different design approach. Shioyama wanted her "perfect soldier" nature to set her above ordinary humans. Shioyama originally wanted Fyana to impart a feeling of queenliness or even divinity.



As Fyana's character was written into more and more action scenes, it became necessary to toughen her up for practical reasons. The original impetus is still apparent, however, especially in her depiction in the third *Votoms* video release, "The Last Red Shoulder."

Shioyama shared key animator duties on *Votoms* with Moriyasu Tanikuchi, who would later design characters for *SPT Layzner*. Videos released since the *Votoms* series ended have been all Shioyama's designs, and epitomize the characters' appearances.

Shioyama has since gone on to design characters for *Galient* and *Samurai Troopers*, as well as illustrations for various *Votoms* books and posters.



Mechanical Design

Kunio Okawara has become one of the most respected and imitated mecha designers in animation, having worked on virtually every major program from *Mobile Suit Gundam* to *Dragonar*. But to this day, Okawara says, *Votoms* remains his favorite.

Part of the reason was the time frame. Fresh from *Mobile Suit Gundam* and *Dougram*, Okawara had established the three basic criteria his next set of designs would follow.

"First," Okawara explains, "when we eventually produce the products [the models, toys, etc.] they must pose exactly as designed without modification.

"Second, the products should be smaller in scale than the *Dougram* robots, which are too big.

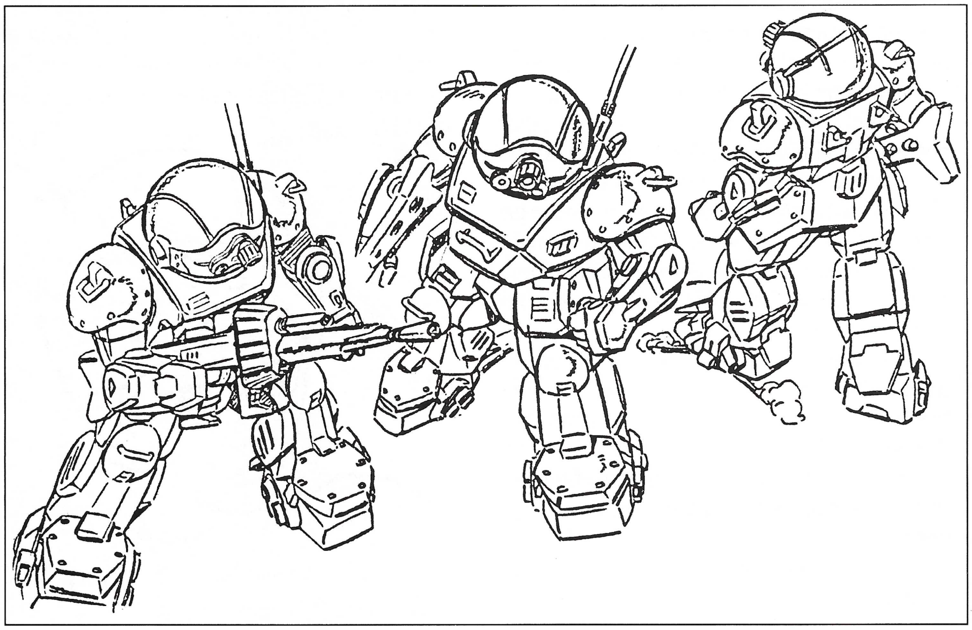
"Third, they must look as if they were made in a factory of today."

Once established, these three ideas result in some of the most appealing (certainly some of the most realistic) robot designs from that era. Designing products as products and not merely as "quick-buck" merchandise was a new approach at the time and served to add an incredible degree of logic to the designs.

Later, however, when it came time to design new robots for the videos, some of the concepts were set aside in favor of "characterizing" the newer mecha for the sake of the story. But Okawara justly takes pride in the quality of his original designs that rise a cut above the standards of even six years later.

Screenplay

Working on *Votoms* gave assistant director Toshifumi Takizawa and script writer Jinzo Toriyumi something of an education in both the freedoms and restrictions of new age animation. Unlike most previous animated programs, *Votoms* was never intended solely for child audiences.



"It's mainly for older students who are more sophisticated," Takizawa says, who enjoyed working on *Votoms* but had to acclimate himself to the smaller target audience.

"Because our target was more narrow," Takizawa says, "we found that we didn't need universal understanding and weren't limited by it . . . we could do exactly what we wanted. In that sense, the project was very flexible."

"I had a hard time changing my emphasis," Toriyumi explains, who had written chiefly for younger audiences prior to this project. Toriyumi was not with *Votoms* from the beginning but did write the first few "Sunsa" episodes, which contain minimal dialogue.

"I kept trying to fill lines," Toriyumi says, "but director Takahashi always told me it was too much." Toriyumi also wanted at that point to add more to the romance between Chirico and Fyana but here, too, there was a compromise.

"Earlier the two were enemies who eventually discovered a kind of empathy, a similar psychological bond," Toriyumi says. "In this part of the story, Chirico and Fyana don't speak much to each other but then they don't have to, because they express their love just by knowing each others' mind." ■

The second part of this article will appear in the next issue of Animag

LETTERS TO ANIMAG

Dear Animag

I would like to thank you from all of the anime fans around the world for finally giving us a bible for Japanese animation. The best part of your magazine by far is the section where you give episode-by-episode accounts of the hottest anime tapes. These are very helpful when the tapes are available only in Japanese. I especially appreciated your *Zillion* article; without it I would have been lost when I acquired the tapes.

The only suggestion I have would be a review section. Before I sink $100.00 + into a laser disc, I would like to know what I'm getting.

I believe this improvement would boost your magazine over the top.

Jerry W. Suggs, Jr.
Thomasville, North Carolina

I think you'll be pleased next issue when Animag *debuts what promises to be one of the most debate-inspiring features we've ever published. Stay tuned.*

◆

Dear Animag

Recently I picked up a copy of your fourth issue (it only took me seven months to find one), and when reading through it I thought I found an error in the article about *Bubblegum Crisis 2: Born to Kill*. You printed that Linna's friend's name is "Eileen," but at the end of the OAV, the name shown on the gravestone is "Irene." The two sound alike when pronounced in Japanese (at least I think they do), so I could see that there might be some confusion. Which is correct? I would have to say that the girl's name is "Irene," but I could be wrong. Although this may seem trivial, it is important to a fan of the *Bubblegum Crisis* series such as myself.

Mark A. Malloy
Towson, Maryland

As you've guessed, "Irene" is correct. Because the notoriously ambiguous Japanese kana *syllabary gives no clue as to English spellings, our translators—and editors—must make decisions based on available information (and at that time, based on the* kana *"a-i-ri-n," "Eileen" was as good a guess as any). It's not until* BBC 7: Double Vision *that the English spelling can be accurately confirmed.*

◆

Dear Animag

I was pleasantly surprised to get Issue No. 10 of your publication. I was worried that the magazine might not last but again, you pleasantly surprised me. I hope you have an Issue No. 100 someday.

Anyway, about the other reasons I wrote you this time: Please keep Mongo's Manga if space allows. I like that feature, and it convinced me to get the issues and tapes of *Dominion*, which I enjoyed. Thanks, Mongo!

I had some ideas for some other columns you could add in a few issues. First, I see there are some Japanese software and video games around. Maybe an article reviewing what is available for the American computers and Nintendo game systems, eh?

I like the technical sections with the specs, schematic views, etc. Please keep that up. Well, those are about all the suggestions I had for you.

Russ Bullman
East Alton, Illinois

We've considered adding a column on Japanese software/video games for some time now, but until we can assemble a sufficient backlog of pertinent information, we'll have to keep the idea on the back burner for the time being.

◆

Dear Animag

I am an avid anime aficionado, and have faithfully patronized your publication except in two instances or rather two issues that I am missing. Your constructive and very informative contents have been helpful for non-Japanese anime lovers in order to further appreciate anime, and for those outside to come into the fold of this very vibrant and lively field. Yet comparatively speaking, other publications on anime (in particular, those published in Japan such as *Newtype* and *Animage*) are more advanced.

Specifically, since anime is bright and vibrant colors, so to speak, shouldn't you have more pages of colored inserts instead of the bland black-and-white panels? Black-and-white rendering may be okay for samples of character designs or samples of manga panels, but if it is obvious that a picture is in color, it should be presented in color. Especially if it's dealing in anime. This is one thing I should complain about, especially in regard to your Animated Plastic section.

In addition, there are simply not enough pictures. And pages, for that matter. Also, the frequency of publication is too slow and unpredictable at times.

I hope my criticisms haven't hurt you in any way. Just consider these things said as from one 'avid anime aficionado' to another.

Raymond Sison
San Juan, Manila
The Philippines

Of course Newtype *and* Animage *are more advanced than* Animag*—they've had a head start. Seriously, though, Japanese animation magazines are backed by a huge, multimillion- (maybe even billion-) dollar industry. Until the American market catches up—even just a little—* Animag *must remain its own humble self.*

Animag *welcomes letters from its readers. Address correspondence to* Animag*, P.O. Box 31492, San Francisco, CA 94131. Please include a daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length or clarity.*

A Continuing Series on the World Behind the Screen

ANIME JA NAI

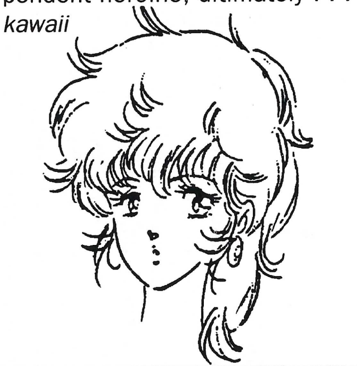
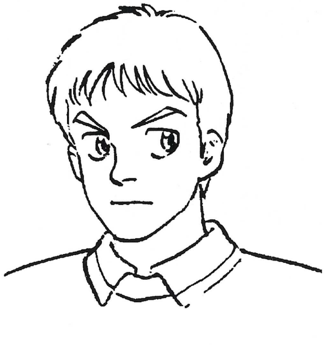
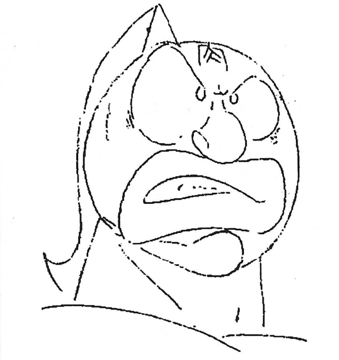
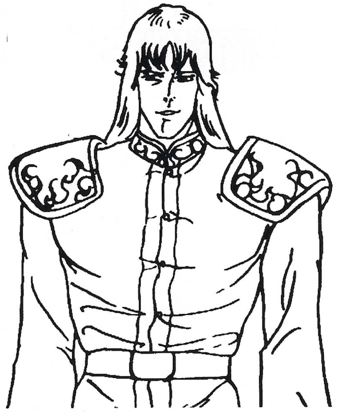
By Mark Simmons

Merchandising juggernaut epic *Mobile Suit Gundam*'s Char Aznable as hyperkinetic sci-fi satire *Project A-ko*'s Captain Napolipolita? Slapstick high school comedy *Urusei Yatsura*'s Ataru Moroboshi as postholocaust ultraviolent *Hokuto no Ken*'s Shin? Pseudo-hip cyberpunk *Megazone 23*'s Yui as lovable Muppet-infested *Fraggle Rock*'s Mokey?

Strange but true. Unlikely yet undeniable. Observant viewers have no doubt noticed several instances of wildly dissimilar characters sharing the same voice actor. We now present irrefutable evidence that this phenomena is epidemic in the Japanese animation industry with our handy reference chart to the voices who give life to our favorite primary-colored figures.

Actor

1 Maria Kawamura
2 Toshio Furukawa
3 Akira Kamiya
4 Sho Hayami
5 Masato Shiozawa
6 Shuichi Ikeda

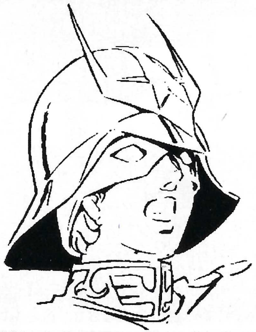
Roles	Most Likely to be Stereotyped as...	Big Break	Career Nadir	Comments
Chum Huau (*Dunbine*) Gaw Haw Reccy (*L-Gaim*) Lilis Fau (*L-Gaim*) Beltocica Irma (*Zeta Gundam*) Yui (*Megazone 23*) Eluza (*Gall Force*) Jung Freud (*Gunbuster*) Quess Paraya (*Char's Counterattack*) Lachesis (*Five Star Stories*)	YUI—Spunky, obstinate and independent heroine; ultimately . . . *kawaii* 	Reportedly talent-scouted by Yoshiyuki "Mr. Gundam" Tomino	Plays "Mokey" in Jim Henson's *Fraggle Rock*	Rumored to intensely dislike fatimas
Takeshi Hokujo (*Magnerobo Ga Kin*) Ataru Moroboshi (*Urusei Yatsura*) Burume (*Xabungle*) Kai Shiden (*Mobile Suit Gundam*) Buxie (*Area 88*) Shin (*Hokuto no Ken*) Akakage (*Masked Ninja Akakage*) Lupin the III (*Plot of the Fuma Clan*) Asuma Shinohara (*Patlabor*)	ATARU MOROBOSHI—Lecherous, crafty high school monomaniac; anti-hero with an annoying, cackling laugh 	Achieved initial fame as Ataru, but soon hit the big time with the plum role of Lupin III when previous actor was rumored to have priced himself out of the role 	Allowing himself to be typecast as an Ataru-type character (unflattering, but no doubt lucrative) 	Played an actual serious, dramatic role with Shin in *Hokuto no Ken* ... who was, however, still a lecher 

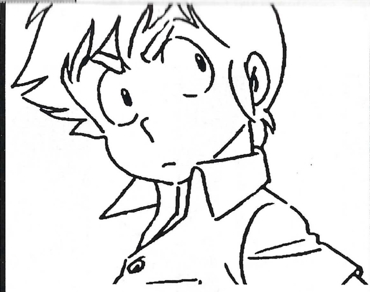
Babel II (*Babel II*)
Daiba (*Space Pirate Captain Harlock*)
3
Kato (*Space Cruiser Yamato*)
Kinnikuman (*Kinnikuman*)
Roy Fokker (*Macross*)
Kenshiro (*Hokuto no Ken*)
Ryo Saeba (*City Hunter*)
Roll Kulan (*Dangaio*)

Tatsuo (*Dailager XV*)
4
Maximilian Genius (*Macross*)
Barn Bonnings (*Dunbine*)
Kei Katsuragi (*Orguss*)
Gavlet Gablae/Preita Koize (*L-Gaim*)
Baron Ricks (*Zillion*)
Ladios Sopp (*Five Star Stories*)

Kunisada (*Dokaben*)
Bundle (*Goshogun*)
5
Makube (*Mobile Suit Gundam*)
Shin Kazama (*Area 88*)
Arthur Lunk (*Xabungle*)
Rei (*Hokuto no Ken*)
"D" (*Vampire Hunter "D"*)
B.D. (*Megazone 23*)
Ryo (*Dancougar*)
Le Caine (*Layzner*)
Donner (*Venus Wars*)
Saiga (*Zeorymer*)
Paul Von Oberstein (*Legend of the Galactic Heroes*)

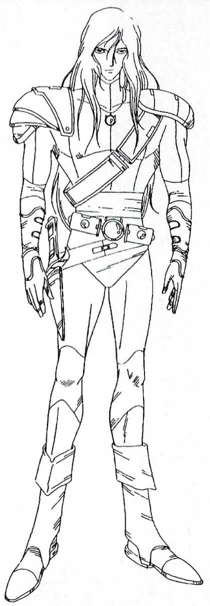
Char Aznable (*Gundam*, *Zeta Gundam*, *Char's Counterattack*)
6
Zell (*Leda*)
Rod Balboa (*Giant Gorg*)
Captain Napolipolita (*Project A-ko*)
Mason (*Bubble Gum Crisis*)
Jeffrey Carts (*Venus Wars*)





ROLL KULAN—Handsome action hero; tall, macho, and generally (that's *generally*) serious

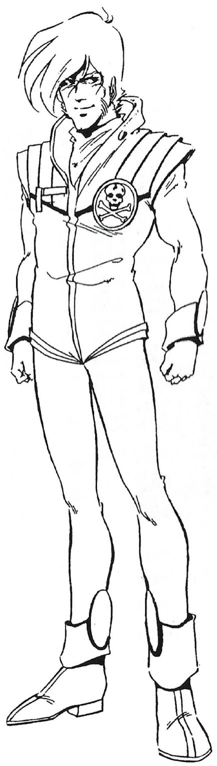
BARON RICKS—Persistent second-string villain; invariably fails to defeat hero and spends the length of the series in a progressive fall into disgrace



VAMPIRE HUNTER "D"—Tall, handsome and vaguely menacing; not merely a macho villain or semi-villain, but just androgynous enough to be beautiful as well as handsome

MASON—Charismatic, mysterious villain; sinister but attractive (but not, alas, as attractive as Shiozawa)

Landed lead role in *Kinnikuman* (the never-ending series) but, by getting role as Roy Fokker in *Macross*, managed to become stereotyped as dynamic action hero rather than farting wrestler

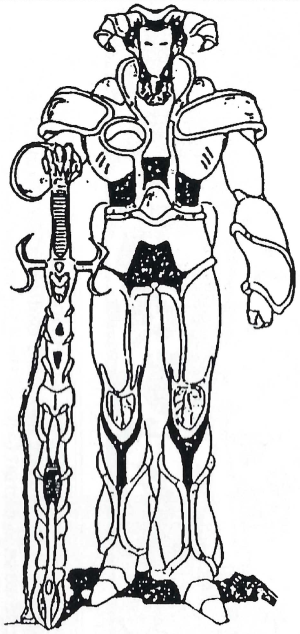


Played Maximilian Genius, a character who was handsome, charismatic, and invariably victorious in combat...unfortunately, Hayamizu failed to become typecast as such

Bundle in *Goshogun*, the archetype of sexy villains (rarely seen without a rose in his teeth) . . . Shiozawa was from then on stereotyped for *sex*

Played Char Aznable and achieved job security for the rest of his life by appearing in a series of *Gundam* sequels (or at least, until Tomino is crushed by a falling space colony)

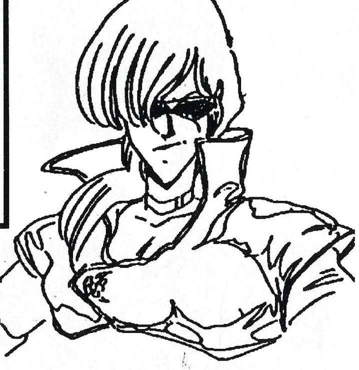
Sold his soul by securing fame as a farting wrestler (*Kinnikuman*)



Played the villain (Baron Ricks) in a series based on the Japanese version of Lazer Tag

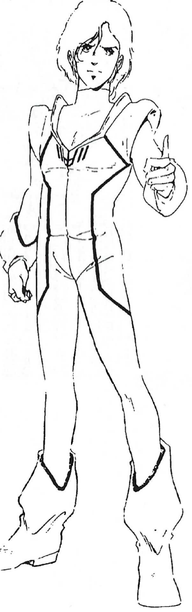
You've got to be kidding

Appeared in *Project A-ko* as a transvestite alien commander



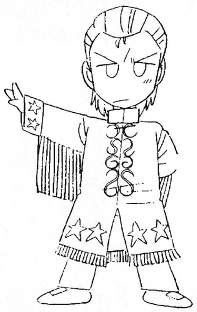
As Kato in *Yamato*, played two different characters with same name and identical appearance who were also minor characters (but still good-looking ones)

In *Orguss*, finally had a chance to play the hero (Kei), and thug on other people

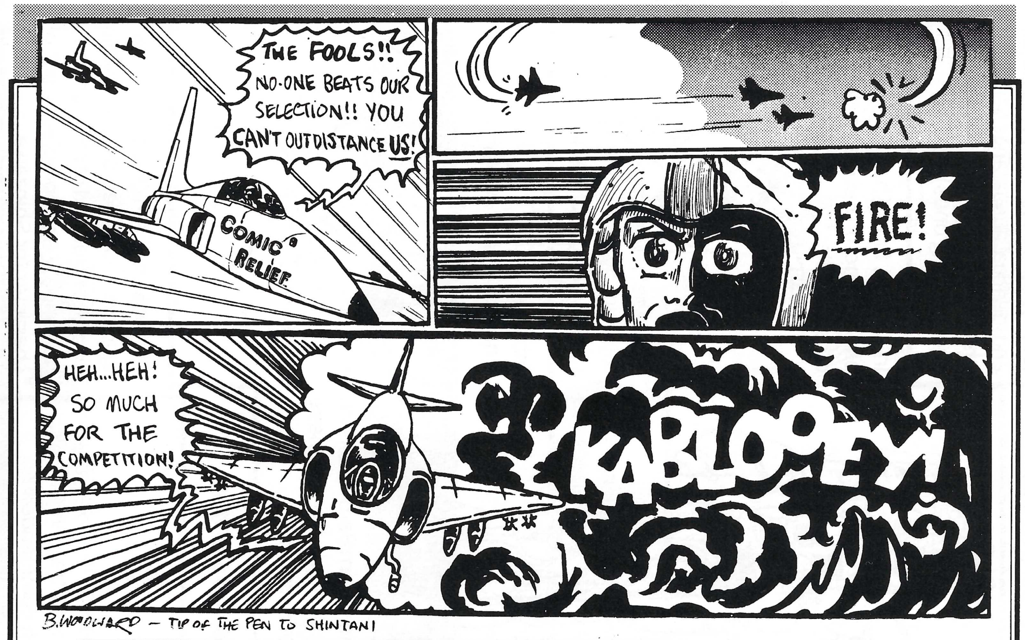


Played Makube in *Gundam*—short, ugly, and totally depraved—a villain completely devoid of charisma and sex appeal and completely out of character for Shiozawa

Like other *Gundam* voice actors, actually debased himself to reprise his original role in the *Superdeformed Gundam* video series



And The Winner Is...


THE FOOLS!! NO-ONE BEATS OUR SELECTION!! YOU CAN'T OUTDISTANCE US!
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FIRE!
HEH...HEH! SO MUCH FOR THE COMPETITION!
KABLOOEY!
B.WOODWARD – TIP OF THE PEN TO SHINTANI

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ANIMAG Issue NO. 10 Giveaway

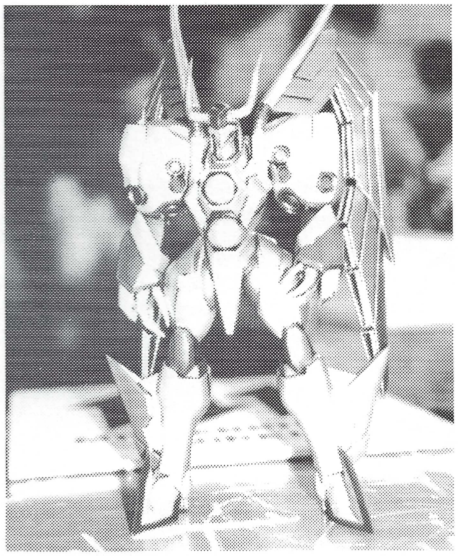
We're pleases to announce the winners in Animag's U.S. Renditions *Gunbuster/Dangaio* video tape giveaway. Congratulations go to **Ben Harris** (*Gunbuster*) of St. Johns, Missouri and **David Beasley** (*Dangaio*) of Rochester, New York. Our thanks go to everyone who sent their entries

ANIMATED PLASTIC

By Trish Ledoux

All About Wonder Festival

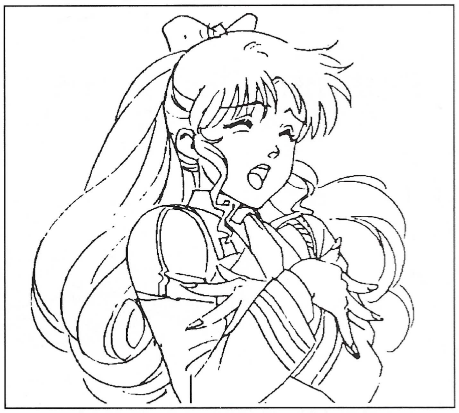
In the last installment of Animated Plastic we discussed model painting. Although we announced that in this issue we'd be covering model construction, we've decided instead to take time out to cover one of the most important modeling conventions of the year, Japan's Wonder Festival.



Wonder Festival ("*Won-fesu*," for natives) is held twice annually during January and August. In addition to being Japan's biggest, loudest and most influential convention, it is also the only public display/sales event of its kind.

Although garage kits (so-called because of the hobby's roots in garage-based model building) are the main focus, personal computer games, imported goods, antiques and foreign books are also displayed and sold. Many garage kits can only be purchased at

The Graphic Appeal of "*Dojin*"



©GAINAX/GENERAL PRODUCTS

In Japan, the term "*dojin*" (literally, "same person") refers to a soft core, pornographical content. "*Dojinshi*" or "same person magazines" tend to thrust famous animation and manga characters in situations their creators may not necessarily approve of.

Dojinshi miniconventions can be every bit as popular and lucrative as more conventional comic book affairs here in America. Kenichi Sonoda (*Bubblegum Crisis*, *Gall Force*) was scouted at just such a fan gathering when a representative from Artmic, one of Japan's hottest animation design houses, picked up a copy of his *VTOL* [*v(ertical) t(ake) o(ff and) l(anding)*] manga. Selected stories from *VTOL* have since been reprinted by Movic under the title *Private's Life*.

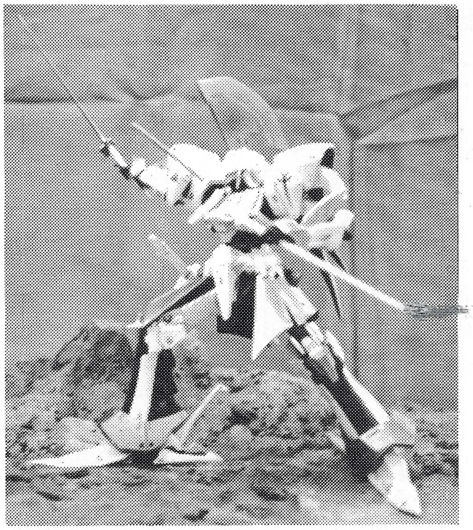
According to Sonoda, *dojinshi* can gross tens of thousands of dollars annually, and take up entire floors of comic shops such as "Manga no Mori" (Manga Forest) located in Tokyo's Shinjuku district. More often than not, themes are sexually explicit.

Kei and Yuri, Sunrise's famous *Dirty Pair* duo, are often paired with each other in prurient situations, as are characters from the ever-popular *Urusei Yatsura*. *Etchi* (lecherous) manga aren't just limited to female encounters, however; women who like their erotica with lots of ink can cherish copies of the *St. Seiya* boys indulging in some male bonding, and people who just can't make up their minds can delight in *dojinshi* spotlighting Rumiko Takahashi's willy-nilly transsexual martial artist, *Ranma 1/2*.

The *dojin* phenomena isn't limited to manga; according to Wonder Festival's organizers, one of the convention's main goals each year is to facilitate communication between personal computer software manufacturers and the *dojin* fan organizations their products are aimed toward. Typical "*dojin*" personal computer software is perhaps best described as strip version of Trivial Pursuit.

In America, personal computer software manufacturers have recently come under fire after the infamous "MacPlaymate" was discovered on office computer systems across the country. MacPlaymate (later changed to "PlayMac" when Playboy, Inc. filed a class action suit) has been described as a type of "interactive software" that encouraging users to apply various sex toys to the anatomy of a seductive female figure.

Those who wish to obtain a copy of the program for their office computers may be out of luck, however; the program has since gone underground after a media blitz sent office managers on a magnet-wielding rampage.



Wonder Festival, and display-only kits such as the whimsical "Rockin' Biolante" (from the latest Godzilla film) are an added attraction.

Wonder Festival is a chance for modelers to proudly present their latest creations, for industry professionals to search for new talent, and for fans such as science fiction film *Predator* effects designer Steve Wang to interact with the people who fuel their obsessions. Wang, a regular attendee of Wonder Festival, is the modeler behind garage kit manufacturer Kaiyodo's limited edition bust of the Predator itself.

Other modeling aficionados include *X-Men Annual* artist Arthur Adams, rumored to spend $1,500.00 each month on garage kits (Adams is also the artist behind ANIMAG's Mongo's Manga logo).

General Products, one of the earliest manufacturers of garage kits and now one of the largest merchandisers of related goods, is Wonder Festival's annual sponsor.

"Garage kits are finally getting to be known by the general public," General Products reports, "and they are improving both in quality and in quantity. Prices are also starting to come down. We will strongly advertise the garage kit market in order to gain more recognition for garage kits through this event."

Although General Products hosted a "pre-event" miniconvention on December 12, 1984 at their Osaka retail outlet, the first official Wonder Festival was not held until January 15, 1985. The convention has been located ever since at Tokyo's Industrial Trade Center, conveniently located a few minutes from the Hamamatsucho Station, just off the Yamanote Line.

Wonder Festival is still going strong. From an initial 700 members in 1984, attendance has skyrocketed to over 11,000 members in 1989. Organizers anticipate even more participants next year. ■

Animated Plastic New Releases

Volks

From the pages of Osamu Tezuka's *Tetsuwan Atom* comics come two resin casts of Tezuka's characters Atom and her sister Uran.

Musashiya

In 1/8 scale resin, Rumiko Takahashi's popular character Shampoo (type four), from the hit TV series *Ranma 1/2*.

B-Club

The original Gundam RX-78 is now available in a pre-colored soft vinyl. Kit is in 1/72 scale.

Wave

1/400 scale resin cast of Benston the mountain from the recent OAV series *Zeorymer*.

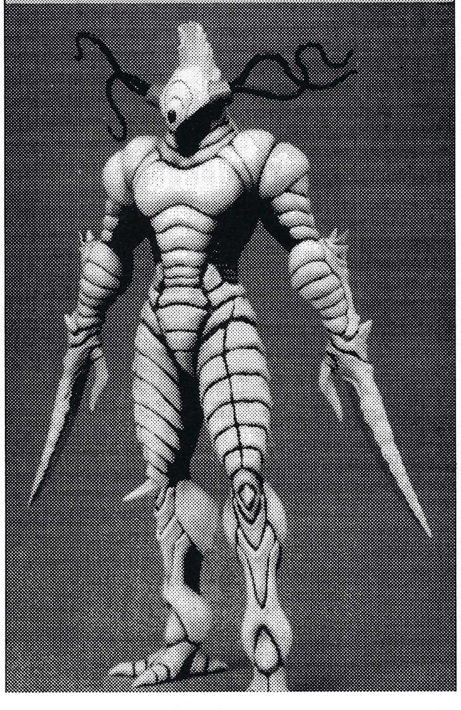
Kaiyodo

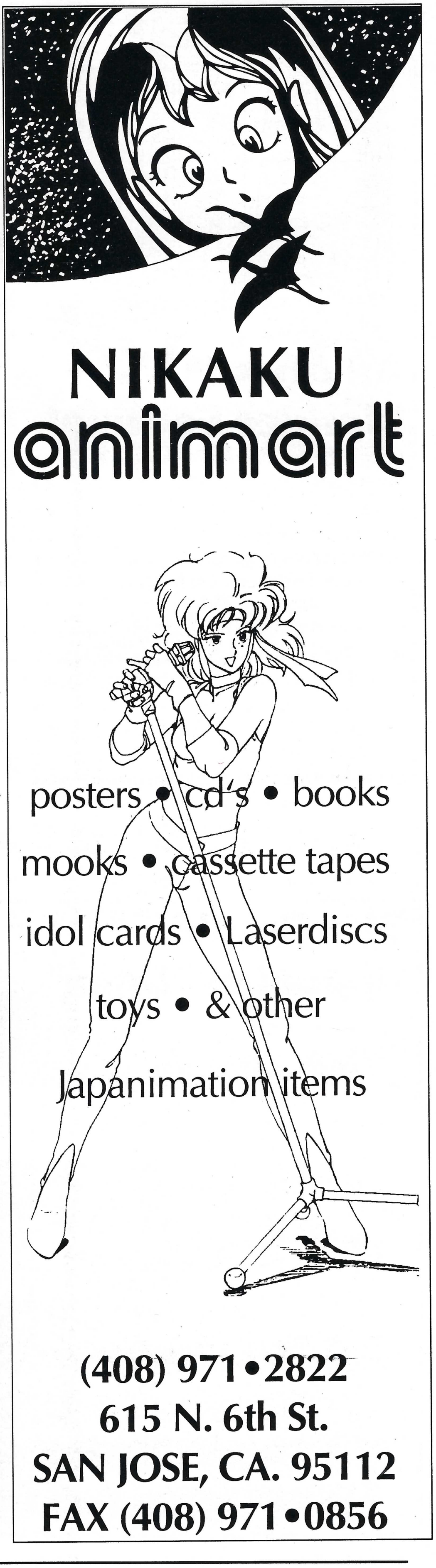
New soft vinyl cast of the popular character from the long-running *Shonen Jump* comics, Young Goku, wearing an aviator's cap.

Max Factory

Zancluth, one of the hyperzoloniods from the hit comic and OAV series, *Bio-Booster Guyver*. All of these kits from this series come prepainted; all you have to do is put them together.

—Tony Del Grosso





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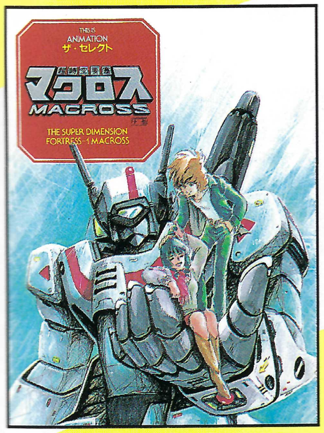

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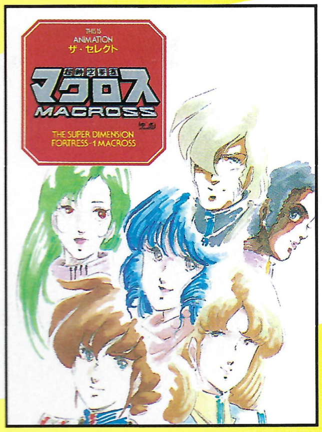

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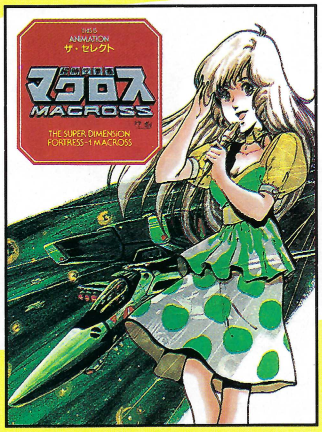

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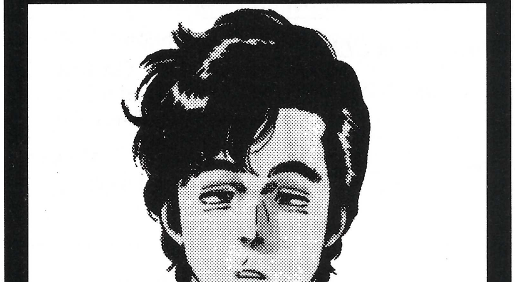
ERRATA

In the continuity section of the *Yamato* article last issue, Continuity Three should have read:

Space Cruiser Yamato	2199
Space Cruiser Yamato 2	2201
Be Forever Yamato	2202 (*not* 2201)
Final Yamato	2203

In the *Patlabor* article, the line drawings of Asuma Shinohara and Isao Ota were reversed.

ANIMAG regrets any inconvenience this may have caused.



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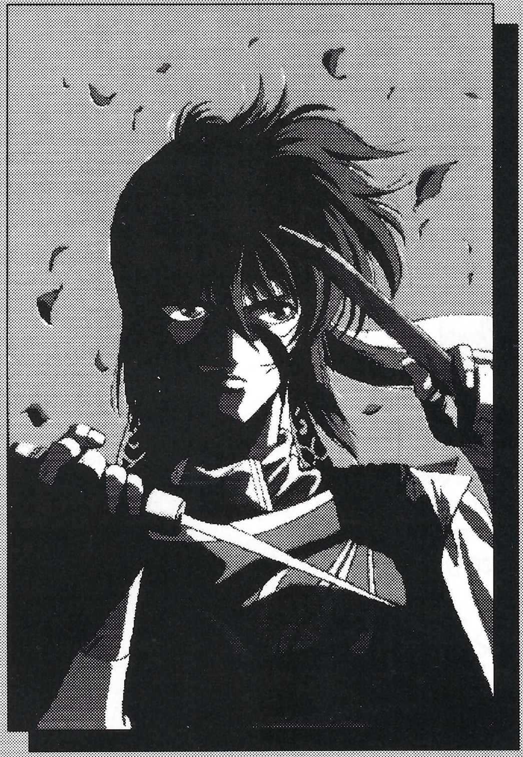

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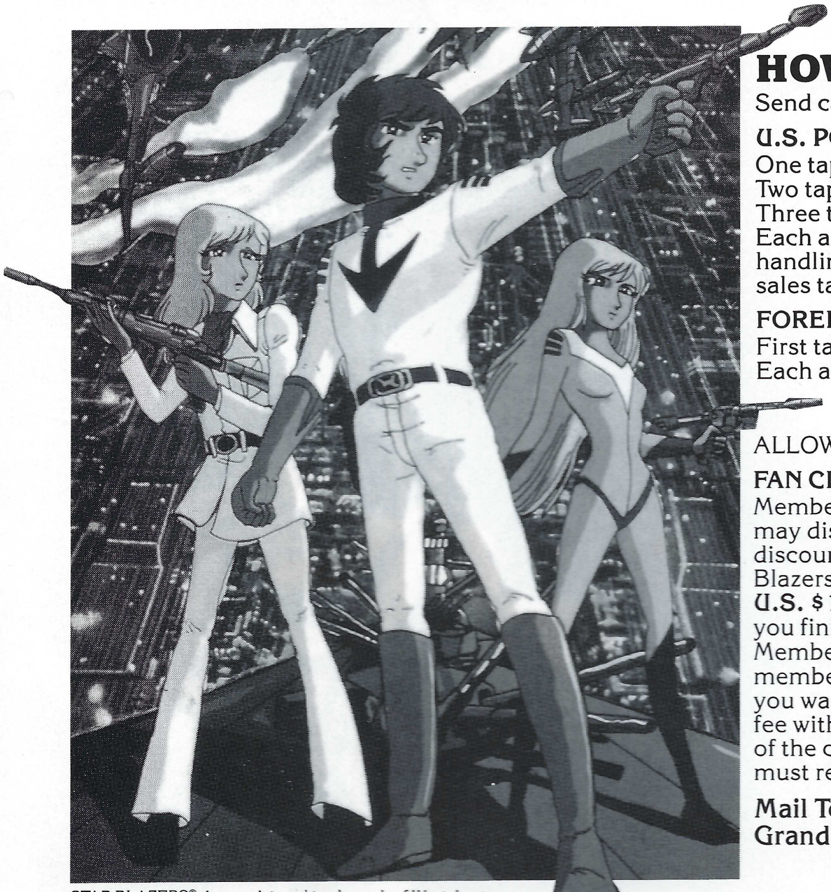

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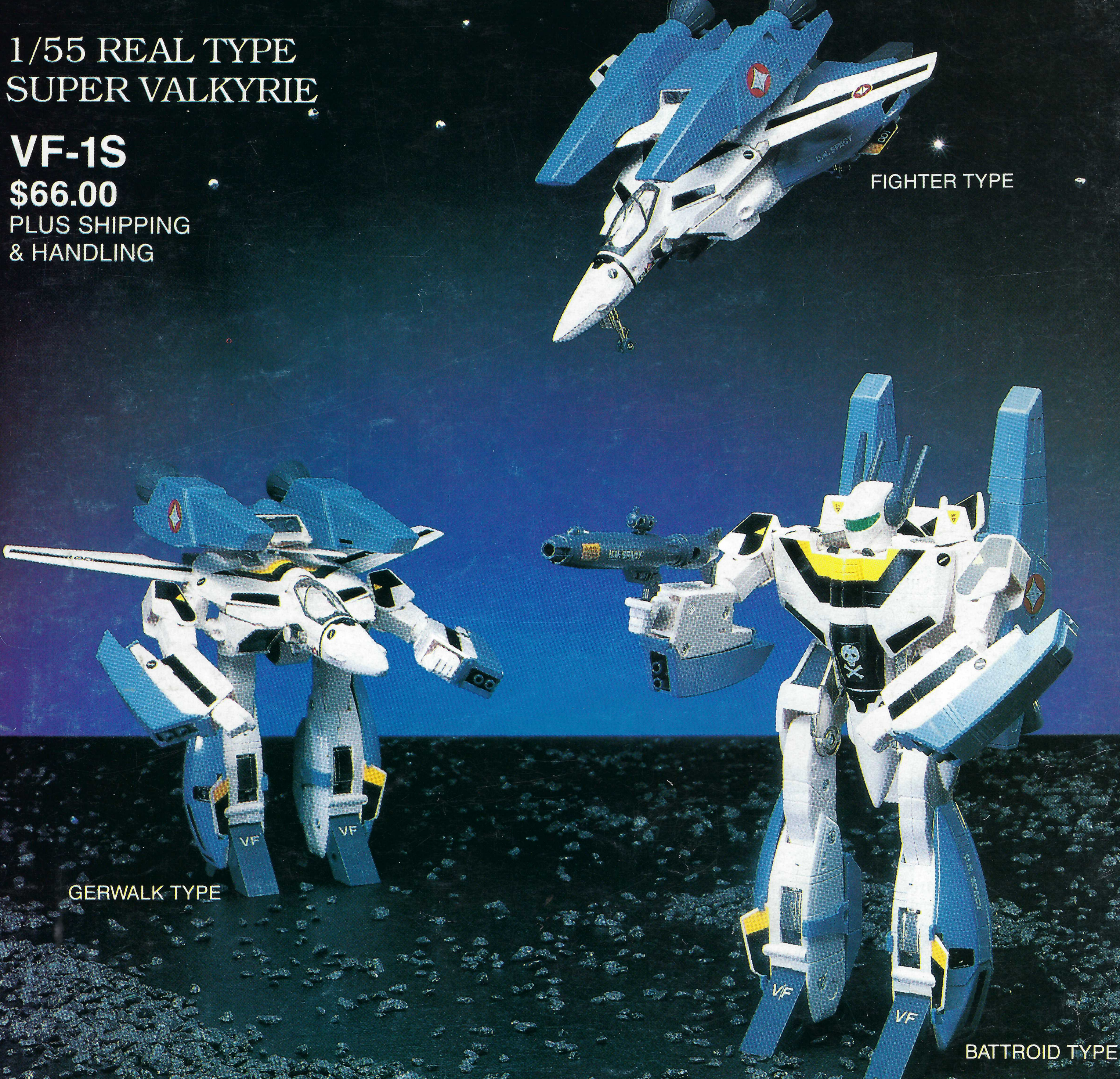
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